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## ABSTRACT

This publication addresses tuition and other fees practiced in education as a means of cost sharing in Lesotho (a small, underdeveloped African nation). The case of Lesotho is an extreme example of household and community financing of education, both at the primary and secondary level, with parents paying for the bulk of their children's schooling. The study reported here looked into the issues raised by such a situation, such as equity and access, as well as management and ownership considerations. The study found that household and community financing tends to lead to a widening of the gap between the rich and the poor, yet it does not imply that the families and communities who invest in education take a greater interest in their schools than would otherwise be the case. The Ministry of Education, although under-resourced, still has an important role to play, particularly in setting standards, rationalizing tuition fees, and introducing special measures for those unable to pay fees. The report stresses the need for a judicious allocation of the scarce public funds available and suggests strategies to maximize the positive aspects of the current system while minimizing the negative ones. Appended are: numerous tables and charts and interview questions. (Contains 24 references and 8 tables.) (Author)



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## Financial management of education systems

# Tuition fees in primary and secondary education in Lesotho: the levels and implications for access, equity and efficiency

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Financial management of education systems

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# **Tuition fees in primary and secondary education in Lesotho:**

**the levels and implications for  
access, equity and efficiency**

**Liteboho Maqalika Lerotholi**



International Institute for Educational Planning

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|        |                                                                 |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| ACL    | Anglican Church of Lesotho                                      |
| ADEA   | Association for the Development of Education in Africa          |
| AME    | African Methodist Evangelical                                   |
| COSC   | Cambridge Overseas School Certificate                           |
| DFID   | Department for International Development                        |
| ECOL   | Examinations Council of Lesotho                                 |
| ESDP   | Education Sector Development Project                            |
| EU     | European Union                                                  |
| FPE    | Free Primary Education                                          |
| GDP    | Gross Domestic Product                                          |
| GNP    | Gross National Product                                          |
| GST    | General Sales Tax                                               |
| IDA    | International Development Aid                                   |
| IIEP   | International Institute for Educational Planning                |
| JCE    | Junior Certificate Examination                                  |
| LEC    | Lesotho Evangelical Church                                      |
| LHWP   | Lesotho Highlands Water Project                                 |
| M      | Maloti (a Lesotho national currency)                            |
| MOE    | Ministry of Education                                           |
| NMDS   | National Manpower Development Secretariat                       |
| ODA    | Overseas Development Agency                                     |
| PSLE   | Primary School Leaving Examination                              |
| RCM    | Roman Catholic Mission                                          |
| SSRFU  | School Self Reliance and Feeding Unit                           |
| TSD    | Teaching Service Department                                     |
| UK     | United Kingdom                                                  |
| UNDP   | United Nations Development Programme                            |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund                                  |
| USA    | United States of America                                        |
| USAID  | United States Agency for International Aid                      |
| WFP    | World Food Programme                                            |
| WGESA  | Working Group on Education Sector Analysis                      |

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## INTRODUCTION

Primary and secondary schools in Lesotho are complex organizations whose activities extend beyond their principal purpose of educating pupils for a stipulated period per year. The administration and management tasks include, among others, the provision of classroom and boarding accommodation for pupils, the provision of the necessary teaching and non-teaching staff and some of the various associated activities necessary for a successful educational provision.

The successful operation of schools is highly influenced by the level of financing they receive, making it necessary to establish clearly what their expenditure entails, tracing their establishment and development. Attempts by researchers to assess the level of financing that schools require to function, have mainly focused on the school expenses that relate more to the support provided by government through the Ministry of Education, almost ignoring and sometimes underrating the several other contributors involved in financing education systems.

This study is intended to highlight the various aspects of financing education in Lesotho, with specific emphasis on primary and secondary education. Justification for a better understanding of the way that education is financed in Lesotho will be made. The unique and complex historical evolution of schools and its role in the development of the currently complicated and illusive system of financing primary and secondary education, in particular, will be elaborated on.

The first chapter after the introduction introduces the study by highlighting the methods of data collection used.

A background to the country's physical and economic features, as well as its education system follows in Chapter II. Here special emphasis is placed on the fact that more than 80 per cent of the schools are privately owned by churches, communities or individuals. Some explanation of the current situation and how it might have developed is also given. Information presented on the schools will indicate the total number of schools by level of education, by proprietor and by other indicators such as enrolment ratios.

Chapter III will then go into the main issues surrounding the financing of education at a macro level, covering, among other items, the share of education in the government budget and expenditure, the key contributors, and the conditions under which teachers are employed. The chapter ends with a brief synopsis of Free Primary Education in Lesotho, a programme whose implementation only began in the year 2000.

A much more focused perspective of financing comes in Chapter IV, with the study narrowing down to the financing of education at the micro level, looking particularly at tuition fees charged by schools, the basis for their establishment, as well as regulations governing them.

Chapter V looks into the implications of the current educational financing system on access and equity, it also attempts to assess the validity of the main findings of this and other finance-related studies carried out in Lesotho.

The concluding chapter summarizes the study findings and presents the author's comments, views and recommendations on what needs to be done to improve accessibility and equity in the education system of Lesotho.

Finally, a project proposal for a more elaborate investigation into the issue of tuition fees and how they can be effected will be presented as an appendix to the study.



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## **I. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

This is a mini-study conducted for UNESCO/IIEP on a subject that currently dominates discussions on developing education systems the world over. The purpose of the study is to highlight the issues surrounding the financing of education in Lesotho, with the intention to bring to the surface some key areas of educational financing that may need to be studied in more depth. The collection of data will therefore be limited to a small sample of schools, just to pave the way for a much more thorough study.

Information and data for this study have been accessed from the Ministry of Education (MOE), a sample of schools, aid agencies and household and community members.

The Ministry of Education has been the main source of information and data through its statistics unit, the inspectorate, the teaching service department and the accounts sections. Most of the historical and current statistical information on the number of schools, teachers, proprietors and enrolments have been accessed from the Planning Unit of the MOE. School inspection reports have also been useful in the provision of the kinds and range of fees charged by various schools. Issues relating to the employment of teachers and their conditions of service were tapped from the Teaching Service Department, while the accounts sections of the Ministry provided an overview of the system's financing.

Studies conducted and commissioned by the MOE on several aspects of primary and secondary education have also been useful pointers to the trends in the development of education in this country.



The second important source of data has been the schools. Here, data were collected from five primary schools and five secondary schools selected from the lowlands districts due to their accessibility. The samples of schools have also been designed to be representative of the broad proprietorship of schools in the country. Data from schools were collected through questionnaires completed by school principals, as well as follow-up discussions with the relevant personnel from the selected schools.

Parents and community members have also contributed greatly. Here data were collected through interviews to get their input on the costs of schooling and its impact on their day-to-day lives. Information from parents is intended for a comparison with that from schools.

The study has also drawn on information gained through interviews with education personnel of various kinds.

Any limitations noted on the information presented are partly due to the small scale of the study and the possible inaccuracies, arising from poor record keeping by both the schools and the parents, and inconsistencies in the records kept by the different departments of the Ministry of Education.

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## **II. LESOTHO: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **1. Physical and economic features**

Lesotho is the second smallest country in Southern Africa after Swaziland and completely surrounded by its giant neighbour, South Africa. The country is one of the least developed countries of the world. It is divided into four topographic regions, each of which has a unique set of physical characteristics that have contributed to their settlement and economic development and thus influenced the levels and conditions of educational activities in them. The physical features and the productivity of these regions are among the key factors that determine the nature of communities and thus influence their willingness and ability to finance educational activities and projects.

The Mountain region covers over 50 per cent of the east of the country (59 per cent) and is characterized by steep slopes with thin soils, a harsh climate and limited access to regular services. Only 20 per cent of the country's population occupies this region.

Most of the country's agricultural activity and virtually all of the industrial and service-sector activity, with the exception of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), dominate the 17 per cent of the western lowlands. This small settlement band has the most developed infrastructure and best access to services, including those in neighbouring South Africa. It is therefore not surprising that the lowlands region accounts for almost 60 per cent of the total population.

Two other smaller topographical regions, the foothills and the Senqu river valley, share the remaining 20 per cent of the country's population. Existing infrastructure in these regions is less developed

than that in the lowlands, with limited access to basic services. However, a significant amount of both crop and grazing agricultural activities take place here.

Of the 10 administrative districts in the country, the capital, Maseru has the largest share of the population and therefore the highest number of schools.

The economy of Lesotho has in recent decades been primarily based on agriculture, migrant mineworkers' wage remittances and foreign aid. These conditions have gradually changed, with large numbers of miners being retrenched from the South African mines and agricultural production in the country failing to satisfy the growing need. Foreign aid is also decreasing and the country continues to lose its skilled manpower to the more economically viable neighbouring countries, particularly South Africa and Botswana (Central Bank of Lesotho, 1998).

Developments in Lesotho's economy, particularly in 1998, were dominated by the declining activities of the LIWP and the civil unrest which culminated in the looting and burning of retail and wholesale outlets, resulting in the loss of approximately M200 million worth of property and 6,000 jobs. This was coupled with poor performance of finance and telecommunications sectors. During the same period, real gross national product (GNP) was estimated to have contracted by 9.4 per cent, the first decline in both GDP and GNP since 1983. Migrant mine employment also fell by 21.2 per cent following some 4.6 per cent decrease the previous year. The negative economic growth has had a negative impact on the communities' ability to contribute to education and has necessitated more government financial support than ever before.

## **2. The education system**

The system of schooling in Lesotho consists of a 7 + 3 + 2 structure, i.e. seven years of primary education, three years of junior secondary education and two years of senior secondary education. In addition, a small proportion of children also attends pre-schools and some students proceed to university and other post-secondary tertiary institutions.

The primary sector provides instruction from Standard 1 to Standard 7 to pupils aged from 6 to 12 years. At the end of the seven-year cycle, a national Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE), which all Standard 7 pupils sit, determines their progression into the junior secondary-school cycle.

Secondary-school education is offered through 67 junior secondary schools in three class levels known as Forms A, B and C. Senior secondary-school education is offered in two class levels known as Forms D and E, in 133 schools. At the end of junior secondary, candidates sit for a Junior Certificate Examination (JCE). The JCE results also determine candidates' progression to senior secondary-school level.

The organization and management of both the PSLE and the JCE, as well as the co-ordination of other international examinations, are the responsibility of the Examination Council of Lesotho (ECOL), an autonomous body authorized by the Ministry of Education (MOE) to oversee the development and monitoring of examinations. While ECOL receives subvention grants from government, it also collects examination fees from the candidates.

## **3. Education policy**

In the past decade, Lesotho adopted two major priorities for the development of the education system. The first is the provision of

basic education for all, with the intention to develop peoples' skills and competences, and also to open opportunities for continuing education for youth and adults, and increase access to education for the disadvantaged groups. The second is the provision to sufficient numbers of people of appropriate occupational, technical and managerial skills, to cater for manpower needs of the modern education sector.

The Ministry's five-year Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) for the period up to 1996 focused on improving quality and efficiency of the education system, with specific emphasis on primary education. While some progress in certain areas is notable, the Ministry has not fully attained the desired levels in terms of access and coverage. The target for the year 2000 was to enhance access to education and to improve the quality of life. In order to achieve this goal, strong emphasis had to be placed on primary education through some drastic revisions of the allocation of funds between primary, secondary and higher education, in favour of primary education.

Primary education along with vocational education remain two of the three priority areas for the Ministry of Education, with non-formal education becoming the third priority area for the five-year period ending in March 2001.

#### **4. Coverage**

More than 88 per cent of the approximately 360,000 school-age population in Lesotho were enrolled in the primary-school system in the 1980s. Schools were, at that time, severely overcrowded and understaffed. The relatively high population growth rate meant that large numbers of pupils entered the primary education level annually. In 1998, 22 per cent of the school-age population was enrolled in both primary and secondary schools in the country – a proportion



that is expected to increase drastically with the introduction of the Free Primary Education programme.

Some progress is, however, observable with regard to the average teacher/pupil ratios, which decreased from 1:50 to 1:45 between 1989 and 1998 for primary schools. At secondary-school level, ratios increased from 1:21 to 1:24 in the same period, marking a gradual move towards the 1:25 target.

High pupil/teacher ratios, particularly at primary-school level in the late 1980s, have had a negative impact on teachers' performance, resulting in a decline in the quality of teaching and learning activities. High drop-out rates by the end of Standard 5, average repetition rates which hovered around 20 per cent between 1987 and 1997, and low transition/completion rates of 30 per cent from primary school to secondary school, are some reflections of the quality of education the system offers.

Another negative development worth noting are the consistently declining primary-school enrolments, particularly bad in the years 1993, 1996 and 1997. This decline could have been the result of a massive information campaign, launched by the Ministry of Education, that focused on the importance of delaying sending children to primary school until they had reached the officially permitted age of six years. The net admission rates, however, show that only small proportions of pupils enter the first grade of primary school at the official age of six. For example, only 24.6 per cent of the boys and 27.9 per cent of the girls admitted into Grade 1 in 1997 were of the official age, while the majority was over-age. A marked difference is observed in 1998, with the proportions of official-age pupils at 15.8 per cent and 15.7 per cent for boys and girls, respectively, and less than 1 per cent under-age, implying that more pupils either delay attending school, or do not go to school at all.



At secondary-school level, the demand for access is increasing dramatically. In 1997, secondary schools enrolled 71,262 pupils and this reflected a 58 per cent increase from 1989, when only 45,064 were enrolled.

Progression rates from primary to secondary schools have also increased significantly (see *Table 1*) from 77 per cent in 1989 to 82 per cent in 1998. Of those entering junior secondary, just over 30 per cent pass the JCE, and of those who proceed to senior secondary level, 20 per cent pass the Cambridge Overseas Certificate examination.

**Table 1. Progression rates (from primary to secondary 1990-1998)**

| Year | Standard<br>7 passes | Year | Enrolment in<br>secondary schools<br>(following year) | Progression<br>rate |
|------|----------------------|------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1989 | 21,535               | 1990 | 16,606                                                | 77.11               |
| 1990 | 21,133               | 1991 | 16,180                                                | 76.56               |
| 1991 | 25,367               | 1992 | 18,593                                                | 73.30               |
| 1992 | 26,623               | 1993 | 19,743                                                | 74.16               |
| 1993 | 29,034               | 1994 | 22,588                                                | 77.80               |
| 1994 | 27,042               | 1995 | 22,693                                                | 83.92               |
| 1995 | 25,157               | 1996 | 21,164                                                | 84.13               |
| 1996 | 30,280               | 1997 | 23,643                                                | 78.08               |
| 1997 | 28,630               | 1998 | 22,891                                                | 79.95               |
| 1998 | 27,802               | 1999 |                                                       |                     |

Source: MOE Statistics Report - 1998 (adapted).

## 5. Conditions and utilization of resources

The official pupil/teacher ratio for primary schools in Lesotho is 40:1, but as noted earlier, the actual ratios have been significantly higher, ranging between 45 and 50 in the statistical period 1989 to

1998. It is, however, important to note that while the ratios seem to be getting closer to the target, enrolments have also been declining, relative to the stock of the teaching force in place.

An average of 78.2 per cent of primary-school teachers are qualified to teach and an incredible 81 per cent of them are female. In the same period, 83.9 per cent of the secondary-school teachers were qualified, including a negligible but growing number of expatriate teachers, and, as is usually the case in the teaching profession, over 50 per cent of all qualified secondary-school teachers are female.

In terms of facilities, 47.3 per cent of the total pupils enrolled at primary schools are seated at desks, while 23 per cent are seated, but do not have desks. On average, there are 4.8 textbooks per pupil. On the quality of teaching and learning, the problem of overcrowding in primary-school classrooms has been identified as one of the key negative factors and continues to exist in some schools. In attempting to solve this problem, government, through the MOE, embarked upon a classroom construction programme targeted not only at overcrowded schools, but also poor, inaccessible schools whose growth seems to be hampered by lack of classrooms and other related facilities. The programme has resulted in a growth in the number of classrooms, from 3,014 in 1985 to 5,377 in 1998. Classroom construction projects receive a lot of donor support, construction is continuing at a rate of 4.7 per cent per annum. These new classrooms have increased the percentage of pupils accommodated in classrooms from 56.6 per cent in 1985 to 72 per cent in 1997.

In secondary schools, despite the existence of standards for the provision of facilities, the actual situation on the ground varies from one school to another. This has largely resulted from the uncontrolled manner in which schools are established. Many secondary schools have been initiated without reference to the MOE, and so growth happened without concern for the overall national development plan,

and most of such schools fail to meet the set standards, despite government's attempts to fund a significant proportion of the subsequent expansion of facilities. Despite the existing irregularities, in 1996 a study on the performance of secondary education by WUSC discovered that there was a surplus of 111 classrooms yet, at the same time, there was a serious shortage of science laboratories, workshops, libraries and other facilities. The situation deteriorated further between 1996 and 2000, with evidence of even more unregistered secondary schools and a growing unwillingness by proprietors to adequately finance the development of their schools.

## 6. The school statistics

### Number of primary schools and enrolments

Table 2 below shows that there are 1,264 officially registered primary schools in Lesotho. Government and communities own only 45, and the remaining 1,219 (96.4 per cent) schools are owned by churches, with 37.7 per cent and 40.1 per cent of the schools belonging to the main church denominations, respectively.

**Table 2. Number of primary schools by governing body  
– 1998**

| Governing body           | Number<br>of Schools | Percentage<br>of schools | Enrolment | Enrolment<br>percentage |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| LEC                      | 477                  | 37.74                    | 144,478   | 39.10                   |
| RCM                      | 507                  | 40.11                    | 145,407   | 39.35                   |
| ACL                      | 175                  | 13.84                    | 52,822    | 14.30                   |
| AME                      | 22                   | 1.74                     | 4,428     | 1.20                    |
| Government and Community | 45                   | 3.56                     | 11,283    | 3.05                    |
| Other missions           | 38                   | 3.01                     | 11,097    | 3.00                    |
| TOTAL                    | 1,264                | 100.00                   | 369,515   | 100.00                  |

Source: MOE Statistics Report – 1998 (adapted).

In terms of enrolment, a total of 369,515 pupils are enrolled in primary schools and, due to the relatively small number of government and community schools, only 3.1 per cent of all primary-school pupils are enrolled in such schools.

The distribution of primary schools and therefore the number of pupils enrolled per district are highly influenced by the physical features of the regions, as illustrated in *Table 3* below. For instance, the lowland districts of Maseru, Berea and Leribe have the highest population.

**Table 3. Primary schools enrolment by districts – 1998**

| District      | Enrolment | Percentage enrolment by district |
|---------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| Botha Bothe   | 25,022    | 6.77                             |
| Leribe        | 63,524    | 17.19                            |
| Berea         | 48,501    | 13.13                            |
| Maseru        | 75,219    | 20.36                            |
| Mafeteng      | 45,243    | 12.24                            |
| Mohale's Hoek | 34,358    | 9.30                             |
| Quthing       | 24,435    | 6.61                             |
| Qacha's Nek   | 15,154    | 4.10                             |
| Mokhotlong    | 15,971    | 4.32                             |
| Thaba-Tseka   | 22,088    | 5.98                             |
| TOTAL         | 369,515   | 100.00                           |

*Source:* MOE Statistics Report – 1998 (adapted).

### **Number of secondary schools and enrolments**

According to the MOE 1998 statistical report, adapted for this report in *Table 4*, there are 205 officially registered secondary schools. A similar pattern to that observed with primary schools continues at the secondary level, as churches own a large proportion

(91.7 per cent) of the schools. A total of 71,263 pupils are enrolled in secondary schools, with only 11.2 per cent in government and community schools, leaving the rest of the majority enrolled in church-owned schools.

**Table 4. Number of secondary schools, pupils and teachers and pupil/teacher ratios**

| District      | Schools | Pupils | Teachers | Pupil/teacher ratios |
|---------------|---------|--------|----------|----------------------|
| Botha Bothe   | 15      | 5,409  | 207      | 26.1                 |
| Leribe        | 43      | 14,511 | 619      | 23.4                 |
| Berea         | 22      | 8,422  | 332      | 25.4                 |
| Maseru        | 47      | 17,511 | 819      | 21.4                 |
| Mafeteng      | 25      | 8,953  | 344      | 26.0                 |
| Mohale's Hoek | 16      | 6,382  | 252      | 25.3                 |
| Quthing       | 12      | 3,874  | 153      | 25.3                 |
| Qacha's Nek   | 10      | 2,342  | 113      | 20.7                 |
| Mokhotlong    | 8       | 2,272  | 86       | 26.4                 |
| Thaba-Tseka   | 7       | 1,586  | 65       | 24.4                 |
| TOTAL         | 205     | 71,262 | 2,990    | 23.8                 |

*Source:* MOE Statistics Report - 1998 (adapted).

### **Distribution of schools**

The population and settlement patterns mainly determine the distribution of schools by district. While teacher/pupil ratios vary by district from 20.7 to 26.4, the pattern does not show a clear relationship to population distribution.

The distribution of primary schools in Lesotho, however, follows population densities closely, with the number of schools being higher in the more densely populated lowlands of Maseru and Leribe, becoming lower in the rugged mountain districts of Mokhotlong and Thaba-Tseka.



One of the principal aspects of school distribution among proprietors has been the desire of each of the churches to offer a school for its congregation in a given area (MOE, 1982, p.65). This situation continues to influence the growth of schools; as more churches are established, so are their schools.

**Table 5. Number of secondary schools, pupils and teachers by governing body**

| Governing body           | Number of schools | Number of pupils | Number of teachers | Percentage qualified | Pupil/teacher ratios |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| LEC                      | 66                | 20,333           | 844                | 82.5                 | 24.1                 |
| RCM                      | 75                | 27,771           | 1,186              | 83.6                 | 23.4                 |
| ACL                      | 32                | 9,616            | 402                | 77.9                 | 23.9                 |
| AME                      | 5                 | 1,961            | 57                 | 71.9                 | 34.4                 |
| Government and community | 17                | 7,998            | 355                | 96.1                 | 22.5                 |
| Other Missions           | 10                | 3,583            | 146                | 86.3                 | 24.5                 |
| TOTAL                    | 205               | 71,262           | 2,990              | 83.9                 | 23.8                 |

Source: MOE Statistics Report - 1998 (adapted).

The variance of the teacher/pupil ratios by governing body is relatively small, with the exception of just one governing body (AME), which has an average ratio of over 34 (see *Table 5*).

### **The proprietorship of schools**

Having looked at the number of schools and their distribution among the districts and the different proprietors, it is important to define the differences between these key providers of education in Lesotho.

The dividing line between government and communities' minority-school proprietors is very thin - sometimes almost invisible. The



establishment of community schools usually begins with members of the community identifying the need for a school in their locality and deciding to seek permission to establish one. Once such a decision is made, elected members of the communities begin to co-ordinate fund-raising activities and then inform the Ministry of Education of their intention to establish a school. A few others just proceed to operate schools even before requesting permission to establish them.

One important factor to note is that most communities hardly go beyond putting up the first block of classrooms before requesting government to assist them. The main expectations from such communities are for government to support them by providing the rest of the buildings and paying teachers' salaries.

Until recently, government supported such communities' initiatives without claiming ownership of their schools. It is only since 1995 that government has, in responding to communities' needs, begun to establish its own schools. So far there are only four government primary schools and thirty-nine community primary schools.

A similar procedure was followed in the establishment of church schools and continues to this day. The only difference has been that churches generally have better organized ways of raising funds and some have been able to put up several structures on their own, with minimal assistance from the government. In as far as the payment of teachers' salaries is concerned, almost all schools expect the government to be responsible.

In the case of secondary schools, the Government of Lesotho also supported churches in their efforts to provide formal education through their mission schools, without paying much attention to the way schools were established. Until the early 1970s, there was only

one government secondary school whose original purpose was to serve the elite royal family members. The community secondary schools, also then known as government-controlled schools were only introduced later. But since government never intended to have its own schools, it took time and some nasty experiences for it to decide to establish its own schools and to further encourage communities to establish more of their own schools. Currently there are 11 government secondary schools and 11 community secondary schools.

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### III. FINANCING EDUCATION IN LESOTHO

Financing education is a topic that has attracted considerable levels of attention among education researchers. The extent to which communities contribute towards the education of their children differs from country to country, with some communities paying for over half the total cost of basic education. Lesotho is one of the many countries where households and communities pay for the bulk of the education of their children.

Most of the cost of education is confined to expenditure on educational activities at school level only, yet the actual costs include a lot more than is usually reflected. While this study is intended to focus on the funding that goes directly into the operations of primary and secondary schools, some indications of proportions of funding for other sectors will be made. The amount of funding that goes into the work of the administrative bodies responsible for the organization and management of education systems is also important to note, in order to ensure the presentation of a complete picture.

In addition to revealing as much of the cost of education as possible, it is necessary to identify the sources of financing where the analysis of educational expenditure is concerned. In Lesotho, as in many developing countries, public bodies are the principal funders of education systems. The breakdown by level of education is essential for a correct analysis of educational expenditure. Costs and sources are often very different in primary and secondary education (IIEP - Course materials, 1999-2000).

Historically, financing education in Lesotho has been a shared responsibility between government, churches and the communities since the introduction of formal education after the arrival of

religious missionaries in 1933. The level of contributions made by each of the three partners varied over the years, with government gradually increasing its share of the support to all schools.

Before the attainment of independence in 1966, the government supported church schools through grants-in-aid that were managed by the church structures. This meant that the churches could consider these funds as income and, with other sources of income, would staff the schools and look after their total requirements and management (MOE, 1982). During the early to mid-1970s, government abolished tuition fees for hiring teachers in primary schools, and required that a fixed tuition fee at secondary schools be paid to government to offset the salary expenditures. Since then, almost all teachers have been paid directly by the Ministry of Education and, gradually, government has taken over some of the costs which were earlier absorbed by proprietors and households.

The development of the partnership between government and churches has become complex with time and continues to be an issue for debate. This has resulted in several studies identifying the need to improve relations between these two key providers of education. While the 1981 Policy Guidelines of the MOE do, however, state that *"the provision of education shall be a partnership among communities, government and Christian churches"*, the reality is not straightforward.

One very serious weakness in this partnership between the government, churches and communities, respectively, is the absence of established regulations governing the relationship, particularly between government and the other proprietors, nor are their responsibilities clearly spelled out. As government contribution towards schools' development increases, the responsibilities of the

other proprietors over their schools seem to be decreasing, yet they demand more authority over the management of their schools.

### **1. Share of education in government budget and expenditure**

The budget of the Ministry of Education may be conveniently divided into expenditure in general formal education, comprising primary, secondary and tertiary levels, and the rest of the administrative activities of the Ministry. As the focus of this study is on primary and secondary education, expenditure on tertiary education may be mentioned, but will not be emphasized.

Going back further into history, in 1980 an estimated 5.9 per cent of the total gross national product was expended on education, a proportion which, at that time, was higher than the share of monies spent on education in many other African countries. But the average secondary-school fee was approximately M163. (US\$21), a figure that was not easily affordable to many households then (MOE, 1982).

In the past decade, the allocation of the recurrent budget within general education at the first, second and third levels showed a declining trend for primary education, an increasing trend for secondary education, and a more or less constant trend for tertiary education. For instance, the distribution of the general education budget between primary, secondary and tertiary levels stood at 64.6 per cent, 14.8 per cent and 20 per cent respectively in 1970-1971 and at 47.3 per cent, 28.8 per cent and 23.9 per cent in 1980/81 for the three levels of education. In recent years the budgetary allocation for the entire Ministry decreased from M931.1 million in 1989-1990 to M88.2 million in 1990-1991. Primary education had the biggest share of the budget, amounting to 35 per cent of the total Ministry of Education budget, while secondary education was allocated 23 per cent. By 1998-1999, government's recurrent budget to MOE stood at



23 per cent, in the amount of M536,547,000. Of this amount, 40.1 per cent and 23.4 per cent were allocated to the primary and secondary sectors respectively.

In the circumstances, it would be expected that in the next two decades after 1980-1981, resource allocation between primary, secondary and tertiary general education would be guided by a general principle which would give priority to the attainment of universal primary education by the year 2000. This would also be assuming that the recurrent budget of the Ministry would grow at an average rate of 3.5 per cent per year in real terms between 1980 and 2000. A projected increase in primary-school enrolment in the same period would also need to be considered.

In terms of expenditure, Appendix 5 reflects a gradual growth for both primary and secondary education from 1990 to 1993, followed by a slight drop in 1994 and nosedive in 1995. Soon after, there was a recovery period where expenditure grew for all sectors, with the expenditure proportions for technical and vocational education and university much higher.

## **2. The key contributors**

This section focuses on the main contributors in the financing of education and what they pay for. It highlights and categorizes, as well, the major sources of financial and other resources devoted to primary and secondary education. Observations of the magnitudes of these sources are made and the types of items on which they expend their funds are identified.

The education sector has been, and continues to be, funded by the Government of Lesotho, donor agencies, households and communities, through their various private contributions.

## The government

The Government of Lesotho has gradually increased its annual budget allocations to the Ministry of Education (MOE). MOE's share of the government's recurrent budget rose from 17 per cent in 1990/91 to 29 per cent in 1996/97. While the Ministry's share of the government's recurrent budget had dropped to 22 per cent by 1993-1994, it had slightly increased to 23.4 per cent by 1998-1999.

Pursuant to the goal of poverty alleviation, primary education, for most of the period beginning in 1990 ending in 1996, garnered about half of the education sector's budget, but its share of the Ministry's budget gradually fell, after 1994, vis-à-vis technical and vocational education and university expenditures. Primary education accounted for 41.9 per cent of the recurrent expenditures in 1996, a drop of almost 6 percentage points since 1990. Spending on secondary education as a proportion of total MOE expenditures, also declined slightly from 31 per cent in 1990 to 26 per cent in 1996. By 1998/99, primary education accounted for 40.1 per cent of the recurrent budget and secondary education had 23.4 per cent.

In the same period, technical and vocational education had its share of MOE recurrent spending increased from 2.7 per cent in 1990 to 5.6 per cent in 1996. The share of MOE expenditures on university education also increased from 19 per cent in 1990 to 27 per cent in 1996. By 1998-1999, technical and vocational education and university education enjoyed 7.5 per cent and 28 per cent of the Ministry's recurrent budget, respectively.

The main inputs made by government in the primary and secondary sectors are in the form of teachers' salaries. A large proportion of the country's primary and secondary school teachers are paid by government, leaving only a small number of privately employed teachers to be paid by communities and churches. Expenditure per

primary-school pupil increased from M86 in 1990 to M384 in 1996, reflecting a 37 per cent per annum increase in constant prices. The increase in teachers' salaries accounted for most of the noted growth. In the case of secondary schools, expenditure per pupil increased from M462 to M1,331 in the same period. In constant prices, this reflected an annual increase of 24 per cent. By 1998/1999 expenditure per pupil per annum had risen to M551 and M1,630 for primary and secondary school pupils, respectively. In comparison, per-student costs at university level had jumped to M56,865 in 1998-1999 from M10,671 in 1991-1992.

Existing differences in expenditure between primary and secondary pupils continue as the Ministry spends almost four times on a secondary-school pupil than it does on a primary-school pupil, but it is generally justifiable.

Another major area to which government contributes, in addition to teachers' salaries, is the construction of classrooms, laboratories and other buildings. Over 80 per cent of all primary schools and almost all registered secondary schools have received some government-funded buildings and equipment.

Government also provides a number of additional inputs to schools in the form of teacher training, pensions and administration of the education system as a whole. Unfortunately, the overall management of the education system is still centrally operated, with almost all major decisions made at headquarters. Because of this situation, the established district offices of the MOE and local management bodies have very limited impact on the schools. The centrality of the MOE implies minimal involvement of the district management structures in financing the schools they manage. For instance, the payment of teachers' salaries, the choice of schools to receive new buildings, etc. are all determined at central headquarters.

While the MOE has district offices in each of the 10 administrative districts, the officers in charge of them operate more as channels through which central Ministry decisions are implemented and not necessarily as local education authorities, as may be observed in other countries.

Government also finances part of the cost of textbooks for primary schools. Historically, the allocation of textbooks has been uneven. As a result, the Ministry introduced a book rental system in 1993. Since then, books are delivered to primary schools to ensure equitable distribution.

A small proportion of schools also receive support from government with regard to the feeding of their pupils. The dynamics of the existing feeding programmes will be further discussed in the next chapter.

### **Donor agencies**

The education sector is generously supported by 15 development organizations for both its capital and recurrent needs. While donors often fund different components of the integrated sector development plan, the majority of them target the sub-sectors which are identified by the Ministry as priority areas, with the exception of the IDA, ADB and EU, which generally provide the bulk of financing for several components of the sector plan.

By education sub-sector, the major donors contributing to the development of education in Lesotho are as follows;

**Pre-primary and primary:** USAID, IDA, EU, UNICEF, World Food Programme, Save the Children (UK), UNCDF, The Bernard van Leer Foundation;



|                    |                                                |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Secondary:</b>  | ODA (DfID), African development Bank, IDA, EU; |
| <b>TVET:</b>       | Irish Aid, IDA, GTZ, EU, UNDP;                 |
| <b>University:</b> | IDA, ODA (DfID), NUFFIC (the Free University). |

The financial support received from donor agencies mostly goes towards capital projects and human resource development within the Ministry personnel, and among the teachers themselves.

### **Households and communities**

Since government financing of primary and secondary education essentially has constant item coverage of personal emoluments of teachers, private financing of education by households and communities continues to have an important role in the successful functioning of schools. The most obvious resource inputs by households are in direct financial contributions through the payment of fees of various kinds.

While households and community contributions to education are valued, the level of education expenses borne by parents is a great source for concern. The average primary-school fee increased from M28 to M56 during the period 1991 to 1996. In comparison to primary-school expenditure, secondary education is much more expensive for parents. In 1990 the average secondary-school fee was M522, but this had escalated to M962 by 1996. Analyses by the Planning Unit of the MOE, however, indicate that the fees have actually kept pace with inflation and that in real terms they have, on average, declined.

Households are also expected to cover the cost of textbooks, stationery, uniforms, meals and transport for their children to get to the schools. Textbooks and other materials make secondary schools



prohibitively expensive, as the Ministry does not yet operate a book rental scheme at this level, as it does for primary schools.

Not only do households pay school fees, but many schools also ask parents and community members to provide labour and/or materials for the construction and maintenance of school buildings.

In addition, parents and community members contribute to, and participate in, fund-raising activities organized by the schools, or the communities in the case of community schools.

### **3. Teacher supply**

Teacher supply is one of the most important factors determining the success of education systems the world over. Issues of teacher supply are also very crucial in the planning and analyses of educational finance. The number of teachers a country has, as well as their working conditions and their levels of remuneration, are some of the key factors that influence the amount of money spent on education significantly.

#### **The teaching force**

One of the pillars of the country development plans has been to augment the primary teaching force in order to reduce the pupil/teacher ratio from 55. The number of teachers thus gradually increased from 6,452 to 7,428 in the five years between 1990 and 1994. By 1996, the number of primary-school teachers had increased to 1,898. This expansion of the teaching force has, however, brought about a drop in the proportion of qualified teachers, with only 74.2 per cent qualified in 1996 in contrast to 80 per cent in 1990.

Appendices 4 and 5 show that in 1998, there were 8,170 primary-school teachers, and that 78.2 per cent of them were fully qualified

to teach, balancing out the slight drop in the proportion of qualified teachers that came as a result of the expansion realized during 1990 to 1996.

From 1990 to 1996, the secondary teaching force increased from 2,217 to 2,817, a growth that exceeded the plan targets (Planning Unit - MOE, 1998), making it difficult for government to provide the necessary number of grants. By 1998, the number had increased to 2,990 with an encouraging 83.9 per cent of them qualified to teach at that level.

The deviation from the set policy of not expanding the secondary-education sector is justified by the fact that there was a sudden need for specialist teachers. But the key problem is that the actual increase in the number of established secondary schools, and therefore teachers, was never anticipated and never properly planned for. The second serious problem is the inability of the Ministry to transfer teachers between schools, even if some schools no longer need the number of teachers they have, forcing the Ministry to allocate more grants when it could better use existing ones. Another sudden growth in the secondary schools' teaching force resulted from the expanded intake of pupils into Form A in some schools, a situation which, like many others, had not been anticipated and therefore not prepared for.

Unlike in the primary schools' sector, the quality of the secondary teaching force improved as the proportion of fully qualified teachers increased from 72.5 per cent in 1990 to 81.6 per cent in 1996.

One area in which progress is, however, slow for the government, is in the attempts to localize the teaching force. The proportion of expatriate teachers was constant at 20 per cent for a long period from 1990 onwards and only recently dropped gradually to reach 15.6 per

cent in 1998. Expatriates are mainly engaged in the areas of English, mathematics and science.

### **Conditions of service**

The levels of teacher remuneration in Lesotho have generally improved in the past decade. While salaries are not the best in the Southern African region, they are certainly not among the worst in Africa, by comparison. Much has been done to put teachers at par with similarly qualified civil servants and, since 1995, teachers enjoy salary increases according to the civil service grading system.

#### *Career structure for primary-school teachers*

Positions within the primary career structure fall within three main categories, and these are classroom positions, leadership positions and advisory positions. Some members of staff hold an advisory position, with responsibility to work in more than one school. The career structure has 10 grade levels, with Grades 1 to 3 occupied by unqualified assistant teachers, Grades 4 to 5 occupied by qualified assistant teachers, and Grades 6 to 10/11 occupied by teachers, senior teachers, deputy principals, principals and resource teachers, respectively.

While the initial allocation of a teacher to a grade level is by qualification, placement on salary and increment points is not only determined by qualifications but some consideration of previous experience is made (Drake, 1996).

In terms of remuneration, the average annual salaries for qualified primary-school teachers range from US\$1,884 to US\$5,334 per annum according to the various qualification levels and grade, as indicated in *Table 6* below.

**Table 6. Primary-school teachers' salaries**

| Title/Position      | Grade | Average salary<br>in Maloti | Average salary<br>in US\$ |
|---------------------|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Primary graduate    | 1     | 8,020                       | 1,034                     |
| Secondary graduate  | 2-3   | 9,948                       | 1,282                     |
| Qualified teacher   | 4-5   | 14,617                      | 1,884                     |
| Experienced teacher | 6     | 20,086                      | 2,588                     |
| Senior teacher      | 7     | 24,712                      | 3,185                     |
| Deputy Principal    | 8     | 30,314                      | 3,906                     |
| Principal           | 9     | 36,086                      | 4,650                     |
| Resource teacher    | 10    | 41,388                      | 5,334                     |

*Source:* Adapted from the career structures, MOE, 1998.

#### *Career structure for secondary-school teachers*

Overall categories within which posts fall in the secondary career structure are similar to those at the primary level, except for the number, levels and grades. Here, the lowest grade level is 6, for the unqualified assistant teachers, and the highest is 14, for the positions held by principals of senior secondary schools. Allocation to a grade level is by qualification and experience.

In comparison, qualified secondary-school teachers' salaries, as illustrated in *Table 7*, are higher than those of primary-school teachers, as the lowest-paid teacher earns US\$2,588 per annum and others go up to US\$8,821 per annum. Another notable difference is that the secondary school career structure consists of a few more positions of responsibility than does the primary sector. The position of Head of Department, for example, is unique to secondary schools.

**Table 7. Secondary-school teachers' salaries**

| Title                       | Grade | Average salary<br>in Maloti | Average salary<br>in US\$ |
|-----------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Non-graduate teacher        | 6     | 20,086                      | 2,588                     |
| Non-graduate experienced    | 7     | 24,712                      | 3,185                     |
| Non-graduate senior teacher | 8     | 30,314                      | 3,906                     |
| Graduate teacher            | 8     | 33,104                      | 4,266                     |
| Experienced graduate        | 9     | 40,422                      | 5,209                     |
| Senior graduate teacher     | 10    | 47,441                      | 6,114                     |
| Head of Department          | 11    | 52,428                      | 6,756                     |
| Deputy Principal            | 12    | 60,451                      | 7,790                     |
| Resource teacher            | 13    | 64,557                      | 8,319                     |
| Principal                   | 13    | 68,452                      | 8,821                     |
| Educational Secretariat     | 14    | 74,040                      | 9,541                     |

*Source:* Adapted from the career structures, MOE, 1998.

#### *Other Allowances*

In addition to monthly salaries, some teachers also benefit from responsibility and hardship allowances. A responsibility allowance of M250 (US\$32) per month is paid to teachers acting in positions of responsibility who are below the position of senior teacher. A similar monthly allowance is paid to teachers working in designated hardship areas. Hardship allowances are paid in an effort to induce more teachers to serve in rural, isolated areas. In the financial year 1998-1999 361 secondary-school teachers and 1,668 primary-school teachers benefited from the hardship allowance.

When the Teachers' Pension Act became operational in 1998, qualifying teachers filed their applications. Because this Act was long overdue, the number of retiring teachers can be expected to exceed



the number of available replacement teachers in the country. The implementation of this Act has also taken more time than was anticipated, but a much more serious challenge is facing the Ministry of Education: whether it can produce enough teachers to fill the vacated positions as older teachers, of 65 years and above, begin to retire.

#### **4. Main stakeholders in education**

##### **Relationship between government and other school proprietors**

The relationship between government and other school proprietors, mainly the churches, has been unclear since the inception of the subtle agreement within which these two institutions operate. The non-existence of regulations governing this important relationship has allowed the current uneasiness between the MOE and school management bodies to become increasingly complicated.

The subtle opposition by some proprietors to government's attempts to bring in appropriate legislation so that schools have democratically elected advisory committees and school boards reflected the feelings harboured by proprietors. This situation has meant that reform at school level has proven elusive, in part because of the dual responsibility of churches and government for both the primary and secondary education sectors. Reforms such as automatic promotion and abolition of school fees have proved particularly difficult to implement due to unclear decision-making powers held by stakeholders, (UNESCO, 2000).

##### **Sharing responsibilities**

In the past, churches were able to provide, often through external funds, a significant amount of money for school buildings and

maintenance. Despite the fact that it is still possible for church proprietors to finance some activities of their schools on a limited scale, most of them can no longer afford to appropriately cover the cost of improving school facilities.

There has, therefore, been a significant shift towards capital financing through government, with the assistance of a variety of bilateral and international agencies. Financial support to schools came in various ways that included food aid to the entire primary and secondary schools, technical assistance, and financing for specific projects, until the early 1980s when food aid programmes ceased to operate. Now food aid is provided to only a few selected primary schools located in the hardship mountain areas. At secondary-school level, no food aid is available. Donor support is now focused on capital projects and human resource development.

## **5. Free Primary Education programme (FPE)**

In the early 1980s, the policy of providing basic education for all members of society emanated from the national goals of self-reliance in agricultural production and that people's ability to provide basic services would increase domestic employment and their possible participation in civic affairs. To ensure successful implementation of this policy, all children would therefore have to complete a seven-year primary course, which is taken as an appropriate standard to allow them the opportunity for further training (MOE, 1982, p. 63).

### **The objective of FPE**

The Free Primary Education (FPE) programme in Lesotho, whose implementation began in January 2000, means *"the Government of Lesotho will provide basic education to all Basotho children. In doing so government will guarantee access to primary education without*

*fees charged to parents*" (FPE Policy Guidelines 2000). The programme's main goal is to provide the minimum and basic resources and facilities to enable Basotho children to enter and complete the primary education cycle. The programme will be implemented in phases, starting with Standard 1 in the year 2000, Standard 2 in 2001 and so on, until 2006 when the whole primary cycle will have been covered. The programme's policy objectives are as follows:

- making basic education accessible to all pupils and relevant to their needs;
- making education equitable in order to eliminate disparities and inequalities;
- providing basic and necessary resources to enable every Mosotho child to enter and complete the primary cycle of education;
- ensuring that education is affordable to the majority of the Basotho;
- providing and maintaining quality education as a basis for promoting human resources development, economic development and societal advancement, thus fulfilling government's broad policy of eradicating poverty and illiteracy;
- equipping every Mosotho with basic skills and knowledge to live a meaningful life and cope with his/her environment.

### **Implementing free primary education**

In implementing the FPE programme, government has committed itself to assisting schools that opt to join the programme in the areas of teachers' salaries, textbook provision, provision of classrooms and equipment, as well as meals. In an attempt to ensure availability of teachers, with the expected increase in enrolments, the MOE created an additional 460 teaching positions, with grants, and distributed them to schools.

Beginning from the year 2000, government has gradually been taking over the cost of textbooks and stationery in primary schools, which at the moment parents make contributions to. Pupils who entered Standard 1 in 2000 were no longer required to pay a book rental fee, as is the case with other classes. Government has now absorbed this fee and will do so for all other classes as implementation progresses. Government also now provides stationery for both the pupils and the teachers of Standard 1.

The provision of a midday meal is one of the basic costs that the government has absorbed through the FPE programme. Pupils are provided with a basic meal as affordable to government, presently estimated at less than one US dollar per meal (M2.00) per day, per pupil. Standard 1 pupils fed through the WFP will also be exempted from paying the M5.00 parental contribution whenever possible.

The provision of classrooms and the necessary furniture as enrolments increase has proved to be one of the most crucial factors influencing the success of the programme. Government, in collaboration with international donor agencies, has embarked on a series of classroom construction projects, even seizing the opportunity to establish most of these new schools as public, rather than private, schools, as the majority already are. The maintenance of the existing Standard 1 classrooms will also become the responsibility of the MOE. At present, not much progress has been achieved in this area, as all energies went towards ensuring that temporary shelter in terms of tents, where classroom construction had not begun, was made available to schools that admitted more pupils into Standard 1 than had been anticipated.

Some basic school utilities will also be paid for by government, but only where it is '*absolutely necessary*'. The MOE's policy guidelines do not state clearly how the needs in this area are to be



assessed, and in these circumstances, the implementation of this aspect is unlikely to take off soon.

One thing that government has made clear, is that it will not assist schools registered as Private Schools or those that have decided to opt out of the programme. While this programme is intended to provide primary education free of charge, households will continue to make some contributions in a number of areas. The purchase of uniforms for pupils, the payment of salaries for any other school employees, apart from teachers, are some of the expenditure items which government will not finance. Also, since no direct cash payments will be made to the schools to cover expenditure other than what government is committed to paying, schools will still have to find ways of raising funds.

### **Public reactions to free primary education**

As might have been expected, private schools owned by selected communities and individuals opted out of the FPE programme. The main reasons expressed by schools which have opted out of the programme are that their proprietors wanted to have control over the quality of education by being able to ensure that there are adequate resources for all pupils admitted. This has not been the case in schools that began implementing the programme in the year 2000, books and stationery were delivered late and, in many schools, the numbers were less than the enrolment. These and other problems, such as engaging a caterer to prepare food for the pupils, are some of the challenges that the MOE is battling with.

Provision of free primary education has come as a relief to many poor families. But not all schools are happy with the programme, as it removes one of the easiest money-making schemes schools' proprietors can ever have. A number of school principals are still



resisting implementing the programme, as many are still not convinced that it will work. But the government did not allow much time for schools to prepare for this important change.

## **6. Summary and Conclusion**

In concluding this chapter, it is important to note that the share of education in the government budget and expenditure has gradually increased by the year, and that the distribution of resources within the education sector has also gradually changed in favour of primary school education.

Government, donor agencies and communities have been, and continue to be, the main contributors to education financing, yet the institutions to whom the majority of schools belong, are gradually shedding off the responsibilities to financially support their schools, but are, instead, more concerned with making money out of the schools. Donor agencies, on the other hand, have concentrated their support on primary education as the Government of Lesotho has identified this as a priority area. This implies that as primary education is developed, very little is being done to prepare secondary schools for the anticipated growth in enrolments in 2007, when the first cohort of free primary education school graduates move to secondary school. However, the total amount of donor support Lesotho receives is encouraging, yet improved co-ordination and community involvement in deciding on the areas of support would further enhance the situation.

On the issue of teacher supply, this has never been much of a problem in Lesotho until in 2000, when the government began to implement the FPE programme. The teaching force had so far been of relatively good quality compared to other developing countries, with very high proportions of appropriately qualified teachers.

The conditions of service, particularly the progression opportunities offered by the career structure, leave a lot to be desired considering that the country is surrounded by wealthier neighbours that constantly attract the nation's skilled manpower. Progression opportunities need to be further developed to allow movement of personnel from the teaching service to the civil service, without losing out on accrued benefits from either of the two services.

One of the greatest obstacles to educational development is the strained relationship between government and churches, which are the main proprietors of schools. Historical trends point towards periods of power sharing and power struggle between government and churches, and this has culminated in a difficult situation of mistrust. Since education financing is an issue of public concern, all existing partnerships in this necessary course need to be clarified to ensure continued development.

On the issue of Free Primary Education, the first year of implementation has revealed that the cost of an expanded provision of primary education is higher than was earlier anticipated. This means that even though the Government of Lesotho is devoted to ensuring that all Basotho children get the education they deserve, such an education cannot really be free.

The tremendous increase in enrolments in Standard 1, from 66,999 in 1998 to 120,000 in the first year of implementation of the FPE programme, indicates how much in need of education communities are but even more, that not all people have the resources to pay for the education of their children. Now, the challenge for the Government of Lesotho is to ensure the provision of basic education to all, in such a way that those who can afford to pay for it pay, and those who lack the financial muscle can contribute in other, non-monetary ways.

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#### **IV. TUITION FEES FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

The widespread complaints about the cost of keeping children in school, especially in secondary and high schools, are common among parents, community members of all social classes and stakeholders in Lesotho. While it is appreciated that education cannot be completely free, several studies conducted on the education system of the country show that there is general puzzlement about the variation of fees between schools at the same education level, particularly for secondary education. This lack of uniformity worries the public and has made it necessary for the Ministry of Education to begin to assess the types and levels of fees charged by schools, as well as how they are utilized.

Research studies, the MOE's impact assessment reports and school inspection reports have raised concerns about the existing differences in the fees charged, their usage and the serious lack of accountability by those in charge of school funds. There is a general feeling among stakeholders, parents and community members that those who pay the fees need to be given feedback on the expenditure of the monies they pay, all the more so in light of the complaints and visible indicators about declining quality education and deteriorating facilities.

The rising costs of building and maintenance seem to be making it even more difficult for the church proprietors, communities and government to improve and develop their schools. Although churches are the majority proprietors, declining contributions from external sources are making them more dependent on government for new resources. But government also depends greatly on donor support for the development of schools (MOE, 1982).

As it becomes more and more difficult for the stakeholders to finance the education of their people, it becomes necessary for the country to set up its priorities and focus on basic skill development education that will benefit the majority of its people. This, however, is not always enough for a young country like Lesotho, whose level of development requires provision of all levels of education for as many people as possible, to allow it to grow out of dependency.

Primary education in Lesotho is intended to develop trainable individuals who can join the economic market and be trained on the job, should they fail to proceed to secondary education. By the same token, the overall educational objective established for the development of secondary education is "to provide every child completing primary schooling the opportunity for a secondary education by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of Lesotho secondary schools". In order for all pupils who complete primary school to proceed to secondary school, the absorption and retention capacity of secondary schools have to be improved by paying special attention to their efficiency and effectiveness, otherwise the envisaged objectives will be hard to achieve (MOE, 1982; WGESA-UNESCO, 2000).

The achievement of the country's objectives with regard to the general provision of basic education is made difficult by a series of problems. Some of the most critical, as noted earlier, are limited access to secondary schools, as well as their low retention capacity. A large number of pupils who complete primary school education still fail to proceed to secondary schools due to lack of funds. Similarly, the lack of capacity for government to provide the necessary resources for schools to function at their best does not help the situation. This situation has resulted in additional problems of poor and declining quality of secondary school education as a whole.



While the shortage of qualified teachers is generally cited as one of the factors that impact on the declining quality of education, statistics show that the proportion of qualified teachers has improved over the years and teacher/pupil ratios are getting closer to the ideal. A visible problem in this case is the distribution of teachers, more than their overall availability.

### **1. Regulations on tuition fees – the legal basis**

The collection of fees has, for a long time, been the responsibility of school proprietors and was therefore governed by their decisions and not by any established legal tool. Government's intervention in the area of school fees has been minimal and very subtle, expressed mainly as recommendations rather than regulations, leaving schools with the freedom to determine their own fees on the basis of what is important to them.

Currently, the determination of fees by schools is generally done on the basis of perceived needs and rarely on established needs. The payment of private teachers' salaries, salaries for non-teaching staff, developments such as additional classrooms, teachers' housing and equipment are among the key components used to determine the fees to be charged.

Various methods are used to determine the level of school fees, a complex process. In 1995, a study conducted by Miser Consultants identified three main categories of schools in this aspect. The first group of schools, which forms the majority, uses the previous year's budget expenditures to project the anticipated budgetary requirements and uses them to set up the types and levels of fees to be charged.

The second group of schools considers the fee levels in neighbouring schools and tries to be at the same level, or lower, in



order to attract more students. Schools that fall under this category are usually new ones, which are surrounded by older, established schools. Due to their age, they lack the track record for parents to refer to in deciding where to send their children and therefore, as they develop, have to use other means of attracting pupils.

The third group of schools employs a slightly different factor in determining school fees. These schools take into cognizance the economic level of the communities they serve, as this influences the level of interest in education among the populace in the schools' catchment areas. Almost all schools which use these determining factors are located in the rural settlement areas, where the relevance of formal education is not always viewed positively. These are also within communities that are comparatively poorer, making access to schools that charge fees difficult.

## **2. Fees charged by primary and secondary schools**

In almost all the schools, both primary and secondary, fees are levied for certain specified items, with variations from school to school at both levels of education. The uses made of the varied categories differ from one school to another, with some schools charging a lump sum of money without any specified items, and others itemizing the different components that make up the total fee charged. The vast differences between the fees charged at primary and secondary schools have resulted in better access to primary than secondary schools.

General observations reveal progressive increases of fees charged, with the Standard 1 pupils charged the least fees compared to the other grades. A similar situation is observed at secondary level, with Form C and Form E becoming the most expensive classes due to the inclusion of examination fees for candidates. Whereas entrants to

standard 1 and Form A are commonly charged a registration fee and building fund contribution, pupils in the higher grades need more expensive uniforms and exercise and text books.

The costs of primary and secondary education in Lesotho, like in many countries, differ. Secondary education costs a lot more than primary education. This section therefore highlights the types and levels of fee items which households and communities are asked to pay for their children. There are fee items that are common to both primary and secondary schools, while there are others which are charged exclusively by secondary schools.

### **Registration fee**

Almost all schools charge a registration fee, though very few know precisely what it is intended for. For most schools, the fee is paid annually by all students. But for others, only those pupils enrolling in school for the first time are required to pay a registration fee.

This is the type of fee that is generally used to cover certain administration costs and, sometimes, to purchase consumable items. Some examples of what schools report to be using the registration fees for include: the purchase of stationery items, transport costs for teachers' workshops, the purchase of teaching materials, the cost of postage and as contribution to the office of the school proprietors' secretariat. There are also a few cases where the fees are used to purchase some sports equipment, for general maintenance and as a contingency fund.

Levels of registration fees charged varied from M5.00 to M40.00 (US\$0.64 to 5.15) in 1995. While the minimum fee charged in the year 2000 remained at US\$0.64, the maximum fee recorded by inspectors in the same period was M60.00 (US\$7.73). The lower range of fees is

applicable mostly for primary schools and a few new secondary schools.

### **School fee**

All primary and secondary schools in the country levy what is commonly known as a '*school fee*', an item that makes up the biggest proportion of the monies collected from parents and households by schools. The fee is generally used to cover a whole spectrum of administrative costs that may include the payment of salaries of private teachers and non-teaching staff. Some schools use the fee for special development projects, such as putting up classrooms, or to supplement other areas where there is an over-expenditure.

In most schools, the payment of this fee is made in three or four equal instalments to ease the burden for the parents and to spread the flow of money into the schools. But looking at the variety of uses the fee is collected for, and the inconsistencies in its usage, it is easy to conclude that, more often than not, the fee is determined arbitrarily.

Inspection reports and a recent study by Sechaba Consultants (1999) reveal that the amounts charged under the fee item called '*school fees*', ranged from M5.00 to M60.00 for primary schools. Charges for secondary schools were much higher, as they ranged from M100.00 to M12,000.00 (US\$13.00 to 155.00) per pupil, per annum during the period 1995 to 2000.

### **Book fee**

Books constitute one of the most important, yet expensive aspects of schooling in Lesotho. Their availability, as has been noted by several studies referred to earlier, influences the success of the teaching and learning activities in schools. Much effort has been made

by government to support the provision of textbooks in primary schools, a benefit that is not yet enjoyed by secondary-school pupils.

The Ministry of Education ensures provision of textbooks to primary schools' pupils through a book rental system monitored by the School Supply Unit (SSU). Parents pay an annual rental fee per pupil to schools. The fee is then forwarded to the SSU to provide books for the stated number of pupils and replenish them on a regular basis to ensure that each pupil has all prescribed textbooks.

Rental fees range from M12.00 for Standard 1, to M18.00 for Standards 2 to 4 and M24.00 for Standards 5 to 7, respectively. In an external circular No. 15 of 1995 to schools, the Ministry of Education indicated its intention to increase rental fees by 25 per cent annually with effect from 1997, to cover the anticipated increases in the cost of books.

When it comes to secondary schools, there is no consistency with regard to the purchase of books. Some schools charge a book fee that is used to purchase books for pupils. This is most common in well-established schools that can afford to advance students books even before they are able to pay the fee. Observations indicate, however, that more and more of these schools are pulling out of the practice, as many pupils fail to pay for books once they have received them. But in the schools that still charge this fee, the amounts charged are determined by the cost of books and the curriculum offered.

Other schools provide pupils with book lists and expect them to buy their own books as prescribed. The cost of books required for secondary education is estimated at M500.00 per annum for junior classes (Forms A, B and C) and M900.00 for senior classes (Forms D and E) respectively (Sechaba, 1999).



While many schools have moved the responsibility of providing books to pupils directly to the parents, to avoid the losses they suffered when payments were not made in time, a different set of problems has developed among pupils in different schools. There are several cases where pupils steal textbooks from others, and this has been discovered to be happening for a variety of reasons. Some pupils cannot afford to buy all the required textbooks, but others can afford to but continue to steal so that they can sell them at lower prices to pupils in other schools. The prevalence of pupils who sell second-hand books is now a growing feature in many secondary schools.

As the problems of textbook provision grow, more and more secondary schools expect pupils to buy their own books. But schools have begun to realize that expecting households to take full responsibility in this crucial issue without support from the schools themselves, is not enough. So they have started operating book rental schemes similar to the one operated by the Ministry of Education for primary schools, except that they are co-ordinated by the schools.

### **Lunch/feeding fee**

Most schools provide lunch for all their students, regardless of whether they are day scholars or boarders. A lunch, or feeding fee is charged to cover the cost of meals, beginning with a minimum of M5.00 to a maximum of M50.00 for primary schools and from M60.00 to M600.00 per pupil per annum (US\$7.73 to 77.32) in the case of secondary schools. The variance in fees charged is yet another subtle reflection of the differences in the menus offered, as well as the availability of additional sources of food.

The provision of a midday meal to pupils is an important aspect of pupils' lives at the school and, in addition to the fees collected, some



schools operate some food-production projects to supplement the fee.

### **Building/Development fee**

Because many schools are characterized by lack of facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, workshops for practical subjects and teachers' quarters, most of them charge what is normally called a building or development fee.

In the majority of schools, only pupils who enrol for the first time in the school pay the fee. There are, however, schools in which payments are made per family and not per pupil, so that a family with more than one child in a school would make only one payment.

Inspection reports show that this type of fee is one of the worst accounted for by schools as monies collected over the years do not necessarily accumulate, even if no development projects are made and no structures are visible.

As indicated earlier, a growing number of secondary schools claim to use the government levy for development projects which may include the construction of staff housing and other facilities, yet they continue to charge a building fee. This fee ranges from M10.00 to M100.00 (US\$1.30-12.90).

### **Uniform fee**

School uniform is a very important aspect of schooling in Lesotho. Teachers believe that it is easier for pupils to be kept neat and tidy when they wear uniform. Another justification is that pupils who wear uniform to school do not have to worry about competition that may arise from comparisons between children who come from well-off families and those who come from poorer families. The fact that

inspection records indicate that only one secondary school in the country allows its pupils to attend classes in their private clothes shows how widespread the use of school uniform is. What is interesting is that pupils in this school are still expected to wear uniform when they go out on other activities where they meet with pupils from other schools. Uniform is as important in primary school, and increasingly so for pre-school institutions.

The majority of schools do not charge a uniform fee, but require students to purchase uniform from either the school, identified retailers or any other sources. Of the few schools that charge a uniform fee and purchase uniforms for pupils, many do so for girls only, making uniform almost compulsory for girls and optional for boys.

### **Examination fees**

Examination fees are one important item that is expected from parents and guardians for pupils in the final years of each of the three key stages of primary and secondary schooling. The Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) that is sat for at the end of Standard 7 is administered and monitored by ECOL, an autonomous body given the responsibility to oversee the examinations by the Ministry of Education. A constant fee of M6.00 per candidate per seating is collected by schools and submitted to ECOL.

An interesting feature of this fee is that it has remained the same for well over 10 years now, and the officers of the ECOL complain that the fee is no longer enough to cover all that it is intended for. The fee should cover the processing of the marking of examination scripts and the production of result documents.

In an effort to compensate for this shortfall, the Ministry of Education pays a subvention to ECOL, and in 1999-2000 M1.7 million

was paid to ECOL to administer the examinations. ECOL has, however, reported that its expenditure for that period amounted to M2.4 million, thus eating into its other budget items.

Originally schools paid this fee to the Ministry of Education. The MOE would then pay a subvention to ECOL, but recently the fee has been paid directly to ECOL by schools and a number of schools delay forwarding their payments, making it even more difficult for ECOL to implement its plans efficiently.

Other separate subvention items are paid to ECOL for the administration of the JCE and COSC examinations for secondary schools, and these amounted to M230,000 in the period 1999-2000. But examination fees are quite high for secondary schools. The average fee for junior secondary candidates who sit for the locally set Junior Certificate Examination (JCE) is M320.00, and goes as high as M850.00 for senior secondary-school candidates who sit for the Cambridge Overseas Certificate (COSC). The variation in fees per candidate is greater here as fees are charged per number of subjects candidates sit.

Appendices 1 and 2 show the schedules of examination fees for JCE and COSC examinations respectively. All fees paid by JCE candidates go to ECOL, while only that remaining after Cambridge fees have been paid remains with ECOL. The proportion of fees that remain with ECOL is highly dependent on the exchange rate, as fees are paid in pounds sterling, currently trading at over 10 times the local currency.

### **Maintenance fee**

The maintenance fee is another fee levied by both primary and secondary schools. The most reported uses for these fees include general repairs, upkeep of buildings and purchase of special

equipment. For schools with motor vehicles and other motor-driven equipment, this fee also covers their upkeep.

Only a few schools charge this fee as, in most cases, school apportion funds for maintenance from 'school fees'. Where this fee is collected, the lowest registered amount is M5.50 (less than a dollar) and the highest is M100.00 (US\$13.00), with primary schools in the lower region of the range.

### **Sports fee**

The sports fee has been a common fee item in secondary schools but has only been recently introduced in primary schools and only a few have begun to collect it. The introduction of this fee has caused much dissatisfaction among parents and teachers. Many are not convinced that the fund is well managed by their teachers in the regional sports committees.

The situation is slightly different in secondary schools, as this fee has almost always been part of the school fees system. Once collected, the money is deployed through the purchase of sports equipment and outfits. It also covers the maintenance of sports ground, as well as travel and feeding costs for pupils during sports outings. Some schools use the sports fees only on pupils representing the school in competitive sporting activities against other schools, making it a non-priority fee for those who are either not interested in sports, or do not get the opportunity to play sports due to existing shortages of sports facilities.

The average annual fee is currently M25.00 (US\$3.23) per pupil. But a disturbing feature of this fee is that almost all schools' principals report that the fee is not adequate to support all activities taking place in their schools, yet all are reluctant to increase the fee.

### **3. Fees charged exclusively by secondary schools**

#### **Government levy**

This is a fee that is charged exclusively by secondary schools. The Government of Lesotho, through the Ministry of Education, expects schools to collect a government levy of M25.00 (US\$3.23) per pupil per annum and remit it to the MOE. The original purpose for this levy was to have some contribution from schools towards the payment of teachers' salaries. Only schools with specified enrolments and government grants for the payment of teachers' salaries were expected to pay the levy.

Every year in March, when the registration of pupils for the year should be completed, schools are supposed to submit their levies, but many are paid in late, if they are paid at all. One other aspect of this type of fee is that, while almost all schools collect the fee from parents and the households, less than 40 per cent of them remit the collected levy to the Ministry of Education, and a few schools report that they do not collect the levy.

Several studies (Miser, 1995; WUSC, 1997) and school inspection reports for the period 1990 to 2000 have highlighted the fact that, while schools generally collect the levy, a growing number of them no longer forward the fee to the Ministry of Education. These schools have begun to use the funds for other purposes, examples of which may include supplementing teachers' salaries or putting up new buildings.

In the financial year 1999-2000, a total amount of M482,475 (US\$623,175) was collected, indicating that fees from only 19,299 pupils of the entire expected secondary-school enrolment were submitted to the Ministry, when M1,781,500 (US\$229,575) should have been collected from 71,262 secondary-school pupils.



### **Boarding fee**

Boarding schools are becoming scarce in Lesotho due to the high cost of their maintenance and growing difficulties encountered by those who manage them. They have previously been common in regard to secondary schools, but are almost non-existent at primary-school level. The few secondary schools that still have boarding facilities for pupils charge special fees that are intended to cover the cost of meals, energy, water and maintenance of such boarding units. Some schools also provide breakfast and supper to boarding pupils, but this, again, is dying off, as many schools provide only lunch to all pupils, and expect boarding pupils to provide their own breakfast and supper. While schools may see this as a cost-saving measure, it is yet another shift of responsibility to households not only to pay for their children's upkeep, but also to ensure that they always have enough to eat while they are at school and sometimes very far from home.

The levels of facilities offered vary and this variance is also reflected in the range of boarding fees charged by different schools. For instance, currently the fees range from M40.00 to M500.00 (US\$5.15 to 64.43), with a mean of M350.00 (US\$45.10) per annum per pupil. In some schools, this amount is included in school fees.

### **Library fee**

The absence of school libraries characterizes the majority of secondary schools in Lesotho and only a handful of exclusive international private primary schools have libraries for their pupils. Some of the few secondary schools that have libraries charge a small 'library fee' which goes towards replacing and replenishing the school library stock. Other schools maintain small classroom libraries that are financed from school fees so that no extra fees are levied for this particular purpose.

### **Science laboratory fee**

A science laboratory fee is generally charged by the majority of secondary schools to cover the cost of chemicals and equipment needed for practical work in science. In addition to maintaining well-stocked laboratories, some schools use the fee to purchase teachers' guidebooks and other teaching materials.

In those schools where no categories are given for types of fee, some money is put aside from school fees to cover science laboratory expenditure. But, like many other fees levied by schools, the laboratory fees are not always used for their intended purpose. As a result, science teachers are generally unhappy with the level of financial support their departments receive, despite the collection of special fees which are meant to ensure the availability of all the necessary equipment and chemicals.

Since science is a core subject that is compulsory for all at junior secondary level, almost all pupils are levied an average of M15.00 (US\$1.93) laboratory or science fee, where it is charged separately from school fees.

### **Practical subjects fee**

Among the special fees levied by secondary schools is the practical subjects' fee. These subjects usually require additional equipment and laboratories over and above textbooks. Subjects covered in this category include agriculture, typewriting, woodwork, needlework, home economics, basic handicrafts and, lately, computer studies. It is not only schools that charge extra fees for practical subjects, examination syndicates also require extra fees for such subjects. The added expenditure cost brought about by practical subjects has influenced the decisions by many vocational secondary schools to convert to ordinary academic secondary schools.

Since practical subjects are usually optional, only a few pupils choose to do them, and therefore pay their special fees. Here the fees range from M10.00 to M40.00 (US\$1.29 to 5.15), with the exception of computer studies, whose fees average M100.00 (US\$12.89).

#### **4. Minority fees**

##### **Medical fee**

A very small minority of schools charges this fee, and uses it mainly to provide equipment for first-aid kits and drugs for treatment of common or minor ailments. It exists especially in remote schools from which clinics and health centres are difficult to access, most particularly in catholic schools that are managed by nuns. A minimal annual fee of 10.00 is usually charged, but it is not refundable to those who have never sought medical treatment.

##### **Energy supply fee**

While some schools include energy costs in the general category of school fees, some have a special type of fee to cover energy costs. The costs of electricity, wood, coal, gas or paraffin (kerosene) are usually covered in this category. Most of the energy is used for cooking purposes, but some schools, particularly those in the mountain areas, use it for heating during winter months. In a similar manner, some schools charge a fee to cover water-supply costs.

It is, however, worth noting that in some remote, rural schools, pupils are still expected to bring some fuel (particularly wood) from home, while others are expected to go out to collect wood while they are at school. So these pupils may not be paying money towards the provision of fuel, but they contribute their schooling time and labour to bring wood to the school – a cost that is hardly ever

calculated. Where such a fee is levied, households pay an average of (US\$ 3.00) per pupil per year.

### **School Secretariat fee**

A considerable number of church-owned schools are expected to contribute a portion of the money they collect from pupils to their proprietor's secretariat. Such funds are reportedly used to finance the administrative activities of the schools' secretariat. These schools charge a minimal fee to pupils for submission to their proprietors. In many of these kinds of school, it is also common for pupils to be expected to make contributions which are normally paid by members of such church congregations to the church, regardless of their religious affiliation.

## **5. Total fees**

Total fees required by primary schools also vary according to class levels. Average fees of M68.00 for Standard 1 and M89.00 for Standard 7 have been calculated, with smaller schools falling slightly below average at M43.00 to M63.00 for Standard 1 and Standard 7, respectively. Another notable disparity is that urban schools generally charge more fees, with almost no difference between classes.

In the case of secondary schools, the total amount of money parents paid from 1995 to 1999 ranged from 450.00 to M2,250.00 (US\$58.00 to 290.00) per pupil per year. This was after some sharp increases from the early 1990s where fees stood between M180.00 and M700.00 (US\$23.00 to 90.00). By 1999, the average total fees were estimated at M800.00 and M900.00 for junior and senior secondary schools respectively. When examination fees are added, the average total fees become M1,100.00 and M1,700.00 for Forms C and E, respectively.

One reason stated by many secondary schools for the high fees is that they have to pay the salaries of teachers who are not covered by government. In a comparative study of the fee levels in schools which had 50 per cent or more of the teaching staff as private teachers, and those where the complement of private teachers was less than 50 per cent of the teaching force, no significant difference in fees was observed. This suggests that fees collected by schools do not always serve the purpose for which they are collected (Miser, 1995).

A marked difference between primary and secondary schools' fees is that while urban primary schools seem to charge more fees than rural schools, remote rural secondary schools seem to be a little more expensive than the peri-urban secondary schools. The most probable explanation for this could be that rural secondary schools tend to provide textbooks and boarding facilities for their pupils, as access to general services is usually very difficult for those areas.

## **6. Other income-generating sources**

Very few schools have no other source of funding besides the fees. At least 50 per cent of all schools are engaged in the sale of agricultural produce, with gardening, poultry and farming as the major components of such activities. But income from these kinds of produce is hardly ever recorded, and most of the produce is consumed within the school. While these activities contribute to the social development of the pupils who become involved in them, the proportion of funds raised from them is generally very little, more so when some, especially the farm produce used to subsidize the feeding, are often not quantified.

Other activities include production of school uniforms, as well as cement blocks. Many schools also run tuck shops and bookshops at a minimal profit. Some schools in the urban areas are now raising some



funds from renting out classrooms, hall and sports fields to other schools and neighbouring communities.

Direct donations from former students who have graduated some school, especially secondary schools, are among other ways in which schools generate income. In most cases students will have formed alumni associations which organize fund-raising activities where alumni members go back to their schools to organize fund-raising functions such as dinner/dance parties, music festivals or concerts.

Within the schools, concerts, raffles, drama shows and sponsored walks are among the oldest fund-raising activities which schools have relied on. Pupils and teachers also play a key role in the organization of fund-raising activities and households usually provide the financial support needed for their children to take part in concerts, for example. In other communities, parents are also expected to be present at their children's fund-raising activities.

## **7. The dynamics of fees**

### **Payment terms**

Most schools allow parents to pay fees in four equal instalments, payable at the beginning of a term. The composition of the fees payable differs from school to school. Some will have included feeding and stationery fees, while others not. The method of payment of fees is gradually changing as schools are now forced to avoid handling large quantities of money due to increasing levels of crime, particularly at the beginning of term, when fees are payable. Parents now have to make their payments directly into the relevant school's bank account, where each depositor is also charged deposit fees by the bank. A shift of responsibility, and part of the cost is shifted from the schools to the households.

### **External assistance for the poor**

About 5 per cent of pupils registered in schools fail to pay up all the fees required by schools and, in such situations, the schools present requests for such pupils to be assisted, to government. Currently the Government of Lesotho operates small scholarship programmes through the National Manpower Development Secretariat, under the Ministry of Planning and Social Welfare under the Ministry of Health. Some expatriate workers also contribute towards the education of children from poor families, particularly those children who perform exceptionally well. Support usually comes in the form of standard monetary contributions to the schools that wish to admit such pupils, at rates decided by the supporting body. For example, the National Manpower Development Secretariat offers a standard support of M1,500.00 per pupil per annum and, should there be any additional amount required, it becomes the responsibility of the parents to cover the rest of the fee.

### **Alternative forms of payment**

With regard to whether schools accept alternative payments, only a small proportion of the schools that provide food to pupils indicated that they accept selected food items, such as beans, because they are an important component of their meals. One school reported that they also accept livestock, especially if such offers coincide with the time they need to slaughter some animal for special ceremonies. Fruit and vegetables do not form part of the alternative items accepted by schools, because many already grow their own on fields loaned to them by community members, or those allocated to the schools. When schools accept alternative items instead of cash, in most cases the price is determined by the market value of the items, but in other cases the schools set their price and rarely the parents.

While labour for a number of activities is paid for by the schools, parents are generally expected to provide their labour without pay. There are rare occasions when some parents are given the opportunity to provide certain services to the school in exchange for their children to be able to attend school. Even then, it is usually the schools that determine the value of services.

### **Change of fees**

On average, fees change every five or more years. But with the currently high inflation rates, one would have expected to see more frequent increases, despite the fact that when asked about factors determining the change of fees, principals still claim that the purchasing power of the money they collect is the most influential factor. Another feature of the frequency with which fees change is that church schools seem to find it much easier to increase fees than community schools. Almost all principals of community schools interviewed during the study indicated that the church structures seem to have more authority over the parents who take their children to their schools, than the communities can ever have on the parents who send their children to community schools. The church authorities are therefore still looked up to and thus manage to make decisions which communities do not dare to question.

Another important factor which seems to influence the frequency of fee changes is the economic growth rate of an area. One principal of a community secondary school expressed great concern about the high proportion of retrenched mine workers from South Africa in his community who genuinely do not have the money with which to pay the fees. He said whether fees are increased or not, many of such households will still not be able to pay.

Schools react differently to households that cannot pay fees. But, generally, pupils who fail to pay ultimately drop out of school because

many schools will not release their performance results if they still owe some fees at the end of the year and thus cannot promote them to the next class.

### **The feeding programmes**

Three quarters of both primary and secondary schools offer at least one meal a day to the pupils. More feeding occurs in the mountain areas and less in the lowlands and foothills and much less in the urban areas, where access to other service providers is possible. The situation in a growing number of urban schools is that vendors are allowed to sell food to pupils during their break periods and individual pupils buy whatever they can afford. This leaves the responsibility of ensuring that pupils have food with the parents, and not the school. One observes, in this area, a gradual process of the shedding of some of the responsibilities originally held by schools to parents, the main reason given by schools being that feeding programmes are expensive and parents cannot afford to pay enough to sustain feeding programmes.

There are basically three different ways in which feeding is provided by schools. The first is one where food is provided through the World Food Project (WFP). Parents in this case do not contribute anything, except fuel in some areas. Food donations are delivered to the schools and it is up to the schools to find people to prepare the food for the pupils.

The second type of feeding programme is based on the '*education with production*' concept, which was spearheaded by the MOE and is still supported by it. Schools are given young stocks of their chosen animals, some seeds to plant, as well as the necessary buildings to house the equipment and the animals. Schools are then expected to produce their own food to feed the pupils, or to produce for their local market and use their profits to purchase food items for the



pupils. At the beginning the programme seemed attractive, but due to a low level of community commitment and lack of appropriate training, many such projects are collapsing. This is despite the fact that an MOE department (SSRFU) was established to support and monitor this programme.

Parents in this case are expected to contribute an annual fee of M5.00 and also support the schools when they require pupils to take time to collect fuel when necessary.

The last type of school feeding programmes are those that are organized by the schools on their own. Once again there are differences between one school and another. Some schools charge high fees and buy everything that they need to feed their pupils, and others charge minimal fees and subsidize feeding with their agricultural produce.

### **Principals' opinions on education financing**

Interviews with school principals revealed that almost all are aware of government's contribution to education, and a general consensus that government cannot afford to fully finance education on its own was expressed. Surprisingly, though, none of the principals seemed satisfied with the support their schools were receiving in comparison to others.

At the top of the list of recommendations made by principals is that government should allocate available resources to schools in an equitable manner, without seeming to favour some against others. The allocation of grants for teaching posts and the provision of classrooms and other buildings are the key areas in which schools feel they need strong support from government. Some schools, particularly private schools belonging to individuals (and not churches), expressed concern that as long as government does not pay the salaries of their teachers, their fees would remain high.



The issue of the annual subvention, which is granted to government schools only, is a thorny issue among other schools as they believe that they contribute equally to the tax collected by government, yet only a few selected schools receive large subsidies. While at the beginning of each interview individual principals sounded sympathetic to the fact that the Government of Lesotho might not be able to fully finance education, their greatest concern seemed to be what they termed '*unfair distribution of resources*'.

The next most common recommendation from the principals is that community and household support to schools should not be limited only to the payment of fees. Most believe that parents and communities need to understand the needs of their schools and play a key role in deciding on the strategies through which such schools may be financed and therefore developed. By getting involved in the development activities of their schools, they will better appreciate the challenges facing both the schools and their teachers. Special programmes designed to sensitize communities on their role in the development of schools are therefore necessary, but none had any suggestions as to who should sensitize the communities. As it is, schools expect parents to contribute much more than they are currently doing. Some of the examples of what principals wish households could do include contributing food grains towards schools' feeding programmes, lending out their fields to the schools and providing labour and services as and when it becomes necessary. For instance, the construction of access roads to schools, in areas where government is not assisting, should be the responsibility of the communities and not the schools alone.

General comments on the level of fees are that they are high and are becoming unaffordable for a growing number of parents. However, schools had different suggestions on what could be done to curb the escalating fees. Small schools that do not have the

required number of grants, and thus have to pay most of their teachers' salaries from fees, generally feel that they should not be paying the government levy to the Ministry of Education, but should be allowed to use it to pay teachers' salaries. They also believe that communities should cover the maintenance and feeding costs.

Another area in which fees can be curbed is '*building fee*'. Many schools have been noted to never stop collecting this fee, even when all the necessary construction work has been completed. Two principals suggested that this fee should always be separated from the rest of the school fee, so that its expenditure could be reported on separately. This would discourage schools from collecting the fee when there are no plans for construction of new buildings. Unfortunately, however, a majority of principals believe that while the building fee increases the total fee, it helps them hide the actual cost of keeping the school functioning and guards against frequent increases in fees. In other words, different types of fees collected are not necessarily used for the purposes they are collected for.

There is also a general concern, especially from the smaller schools whose communities are struggling to pay fees, that some well-established schools charge more than they really need to run their schools, and accumulate wealth for the benefit of the proprietors.

## **8. Impact of tuition fees on families**

Different values govern the decisions of families concerning primary education for boys and girls. Statistical records from the MOE reveal that about 30 per cent of school-age boys are not enrolled in school every year and a high proportion of those who register leave school before completing the primary-school cycle. This is often attributed to the need for boys to herd cattle and other domestic animals. Current economic changes that have resulted in a decline in employment opportunities in the South African mines, which

attracted men with minimal or no formal education, are expected to contribute to an increased demand for primary education for boys.

In as far as the girls are concerned, economic necessity does not seem to be the key factor in the decision to allow or disallow girls from enrolling into primary schools. The main factors determining the attendance of girls seem to be the distance from the school and parents' commitment to education, more than concerns about what households forego when their children go to school.

Moving on to secondary schools, one observes a slight change in the way parents decide who to withdraw when they can no longer afford to keep all their children in school. The observed change at this level results mainly from the fact that progression from primary school to secondary school is not only determined by a pass in Standard 7, but also the ability of parents to pay the fees, which are much higher than those charged by primary schools. While the enrolment of girls at this level is higher than that of boys, due to the high drop-out rate for boys at primary-school level, more girls than boys are withdrawn from school due to lack of resources. This practice is more common in rural communities, where boys are brought up to be breadwinners, and girls are not necessarily expected to earn their living, but to be taken care of by their parents, brothers or husbands for the rest of their lives. The situation in urban communities is slightly different though, and parents' commitment to educating their children is higher. A contributing factor is that over 90 per cent of employed urban dwellers earn incomes, unlike in rural areas, where almost 65 per cent of workers are engaged in subsistence farming, which does not necessarily earn them much income, but is rather their way of living. Proportions of the unemployed are also higher in rural than urban areas (Appendix 7).

In addition to the country's high unemployment rate, there are several taxation policies which increase the burden on those who

earn income. The most important tax, that affects all citizens, regardless of whether they are employed or not, is the General Sales Tax (GST), which, moreover, is set at a high rate. A 10 per cent sales tax is imposed on all goods and services in Lesotho and is payable by all citizens, apart from those with special exemptions, among them institutions and individuals providing education, financial and transportation services. This exemption in fact leaves a large portion of households not liable for this tax.

The second major form of taxation in Lesotho is income tax, and this is applicable only to employed citizens who earn income. In 1996, the Government of Lesotho revised the Income Tax Bill, increasing the tax burden as shown in Box 1 below.

**Box 1. Income tax rates**

| <b>Chargeable income</b> | <b>Rate of tax</b> |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--|
| First M30,000            | 25 per cent        |  |
| Over M30,000             | 35 per cent        |  |

A tax credit of M2,640 per annum is made available to each resident taxpayer. This totals M220 per month and is applicable at all income levels. This tax credit is deducted from the tax calculated on the chargeable income of the resident.

**Example**

A taxpayer earns M60,000 per annum and has no other deductions, such as pension-fund contributions. His tax computation will be as follows:

|                                                     | Per annum | Per month |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Gross income                                        | 60,000    | 5,000     |
| Less                                                |           |           |
| Allowable deductions,<br>e.g. pension contributions | Nil       | Nil       |
| Chargeable income                                   | 60,000    | 5,000     |
| Tax thereon                                         | 18,000    | 1,500     |
| Less tax credit                                     | 2,640     | 220       |
| Tax payable                                         | 15,360    | 1,280     |



## 9. Managing school finances

### Regulations on managing school finances

According to the Education Act of 1995, a principal is *"the chief accounting officer of the school and shall be responsible to the Management Committee or the School Board for the control and use of school funds"*. The schools' advisory and management committees, for primary schools, and the school boards for secondary schools, supervise the schools for which they have been constituted and are thus responsible for the management and for the proper and efficient running of the school.

The principal, together with school staff, usually handles the management of financial resources, budgeting and determining the level of fees. The estimates are then presented to the committees and boards for approval. If the presented estimates reflect well-justified increases in fees, the expectation is that parents will be called to the school to discuss the proposed increases and, if they agree, the fees will be increased and the committees/boards will then approve the budget.

Once the budget and the fee structure have been approved, the principal begins to collect fees and expends them as authorized by the committee/board. But it is still the responsibility of the committee/board to ensure that:

- periodically, the principal submits a financial progress report that will be compared to the budget for apparent reviews and re-prioritizing;
- at the end of each school year the principal submits an Annual Financial Statement for approval by the board;
- an audited statement of accounts is submitted to the proprietor and the Principal Secretary at the end of each school year.

Source: Education Act, 1995.



### **How schools manage finances**

Government policies on the management of schools' financial resources are relatively clear, yet the reality, as observed by school inspectors, is far from what is recommended. To begin with, the powers of principals are seriously undermined by some communities and proprietors so that fees collected are submitted to such bodies and their usage is decided upon by them. In situations like these, budgets are normally not drawn, nor are financial reports ever made.

Other than undermining the powers of the principals, the majority of school committees and boards do not have the knowledge and expertise to monitor and supervise principals in their handling of school finances. This means that, often, principals are left to manage schools' finances on their own, as very few committees/boards have the capacity to question anything they do. But even for those with the right educational background to be able to monitor the principal, many do not quite understand their responsibilities and duties, and therefore lack the confidence to do much, leaving too many decision-making powers to one individual – the principal.

The Education Act of 1995 states that audited statements of accounts are to be submitted to the proprietor and the Principal Secretary (MOE) at the end of each school year. But schools hardly ever wish to have their accounts audited, because the authorities who should take an interest in ensuring the proper management of schools' finances, do not have the capacity to do so. And since auditing accounts would be an extra cost for schools, they avoid such a cost when possible.

### **10. Summary and conclusion**

This chapter has highlighted a number of issues with regard to fees charged to sustain education in Lesotho. The first is that the

regulation of fees in the country is very lax, allowing those in positions of authority to collect fees from households and communities with few restrictions. This situation continues despite the growing levels of poverty in the country, thus jeopardizing the government's attempts at alleviation.

Government has, however, begun to implement a number of programmes, particularly in primary school education, with the intention to lower the cost of education for households and communities. These include the book-rental scheme and the introduction of free primary education in the lower classes, which will hopefully reach all classes.

Considering that primary education is much more affordable than secondary education, as illustrated by the level of fees charged, one would expect the government to get more involved in regulating the levels of financial support schools expect from households and communities. The fact that not all schools are certain of the amount of money they require in a year to function efficiently, presents a negative picture of the management of school financing in the country.

Communities' and households' involvement in the development of their schools is minimal. Many schools continue to operate as if they are separate entities from the communities within which they are established. Both the schools and the communities believe that government should distribute available resources more equitably, and communities also feel that schools' expenditure should be monitored more closely, as most are convinced that not all schools need the kind of money they are collecting from them.

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## **V. IMPLICATIONS FOR ACCESS, EQUITY AND EFFICIENCY**

In Lesotho, the involvement of households and communities in the financing of education has existed since the first mission schools were established. In the beginning, parental contributions towards the upkeep of schools could not easily be differentiated from contributions made to their churches, because it was the churches that organized and managed the schools. As time went on, the amount of financial contributions required by schools became unaffordable for some households and communities. This situation has had major implications for equity and access in the education sector.

Geographic and socio-economic dimensions are important factors in assessing the levels of equity and access in education in a country where the different physical regions enjoy varying levels of economic development.

### **1. Geographic equity and access**

Due to the strong element of household and community financing in Lesotho, considerable geographic disparities are observed. The continuance of private financing for education further increases disparities between people of different economic groups, which are basically distributed by regions. Prosperous communities are already in a much better position to help themselves than are those that are poor. Cultural practices within regions differ, and these differences also play an important role in influencing parents' decisions on whether to send their children to school or not.

There are basically two types of economy in Lesotho, which have marked implications for equity, access and efficiency in education. These are the money economy and the agricultural economy. Schools are generally associated with the money economy, and it is mainly parents who earn money, who also wish their children to grow up

prepared to join the money economy, who are most likely to send their children to school. Households whose livelihoods depend on agricultural production, which is not always determined by the level of formal education one has attained, may make fetch enough money from their mainly subsistence farming to pay the fees. In addition to influencing the extent to which communities decide to send their children to school, these differences determine the level of support such households can provide to their children to ensure completion.

It is also an indisputable fact that the levels of poverty in Lesotho are getting worse by the year, and that while some regions are hit harder by poverty, it actually cuts across all geographic regions in the country. Sechaba Consultants indicate that in 1999, an average of 37 per cent of children between the ages of 6 and 15 years were not in school. The study further reveals that, while there are several reasons for children not to be in school, the great majority of them are out of school because their parents cannot afford to pay the fees.

Other reasons, which affect younger children of ages six and seven years, are related to the physical inaccessibility of schools, as many of the parents consider six and seven year olds too young to walk the long distances to schools which can be unsafe. It is estimated that, on average, primary-school pupils take 26.5 minutes to get to school, with 97 per cent of them walking. Secondary-school pupils take an average of 25.7 minutes to school and 83 per cent of them walk. These figures obviously hide the fact that 8 per cent of primary-school pupils and 6 per cent of secondary school pupils walk for over an hour to get to their school every day. It is mainly pupils in the mountain region who have greater distances to travel in areas where roads are almost non-existent.

In terms of the costs of education, disparities are also observed within single physical regions, especially between urban and rural areas. The cost of education seems to be higher in the urban areas

because, in addition to the regular school fees, households face demands for supplementary tutoring for their children. It is the availability of such extra tutoring opportunities, and the fact that most parents in urban areas can afford to release their children during weekends and school holidays, and pay for such sessions, that extend the educational gap between children in urban areas and those in rural areas.

Statistical reports by the Ministry of Education indicate that, historically, the proportion of boys not in school is higher than that of girls, a rather unique situation in the African continent, where the main issue is ensuring that the girl child gets enrolled in school. Below, *Table 8* illustrates the proportions of children between 6 and 15 years of age, of selected cases of children by regionally influenced economic level of the parents, and what the children not in school are doing.

**Table 8. Relationship between parents' economic level and children's occupation**

| Occupation<br>of children | Worse case<br>Mountains, 15 years,<br>Destitute |            | Best case<br>Urban, 8 years,<br>Well-off/wealthy |            |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------|
|                           | Boys<br>%                                       | Girls<br>% | Boys<br>%                                        | Girls<br>% |
| Scholar                   | 35.8                                            | 66.5       | 88.2                                             | 100.0      |
| Shepherd                  | 44.3                                            | -          | -                                                | -          |
| Housework                 | 1.4                                             | 30.5       | -                                                | -          |
| Farmer                    | 9.2                                             | -          | -                                                | -          |
| None                      | 6.8                                             | 1.6        | 5.9                                              | -          |
| Wage worker               | -                                               | -          | 5.9                                              | -          |
| Servant                   | 2.4                                             | -          | -                                                | -          |
| Job seeker                | -                                               | 1.4        | -                                                | -          |
| Total                     | 100.0                                           | 100.0      | 100.0                                            | 100.0      |

Source: Sechaba Consultants, 1999 Household Survey.



## **2. Socio-economic equity and access**

The line separating the influence of geographic and socio-economic features on equity and access in education in Lesotho is very thin, if it exists at all. As indicated earlier, the demands for household and community financing in most developing countries, Lesotho included, favour the rich and discriminate against the poor. Children from prosperous backgrounds have several choices, making access to education easy for them. In Lesotho, the choices made by the rich and well-off households are guided by the quality of schools available, while for the poor, choices are guided by affordability. Since parents pay for the education of their children, they pick and choose the school to which their children may go. It is generally those who can afford to pay the costs, who benefit from the choice of schools available, because even if the school they choose is far from where they live, they can afford high boarding fees. Poorer households are usually limited to enrolling their children in local schools, where children can walk to school every day and come back home to do some house chores when necessary.

The limited choices available to the poor make it difficult for their children to enter the education system and to succeed, as the quality of the school they choose is not always the best. Even if children from poor families are enrolled into a good-quality school, their chances of completing their course of study remain limited by the high cost of such schools. When schools are asked what special arrangements they make for poor children, very few seem to be sympathetic to the problems faced by children from poor households.

According to the UNDP (1999), about 50 per cent of the country's population lived below the income poverty line of \$1.00 a day in the period 1989 to 1994. During the same period, 26 per cent of the population lived below the national poverty line. The GDP per capita

and GNP per capita, which stood at US\$391 and US\$680 respectively in 1997, confirm the acuteness of poverty in Lesotho, and the difficulty for many to afford the cost of education.

A number of other social factors aggravate the condition of poor families and one of these is the number of children born per family. While the total fertility rate has decreased from 5.8 in 1975 to 4.8 in 1997, poor families typically still have five children, as compared to an average of three children for rich families, thus increasing the burden of educating them.

While a considerable number of scholars of education and economics (IIEP training modules 1999-2000) suggest that investment in primary education can generate a substantial private rate of return, many households in Lesotho still do not have the resources to make such a necessary investment. In such acute conditions of poverty, it becomes difficult for households to realize that education could help their children to break the poverty cycle, wanting instead to hold on to the services they provide when they do not attend school.

### **3. Internal efficiency**

Internal efficiency in education systems usually refers to the proportion of students who complete designated segments in those systems. This is calculated on the basis of drop-out, repetition and promotion rates. When drop-out and repetition rates are high before the end of each cycle, then that portion of the education system is said to have serious internal inefficiency. The higher the promotion and completion rates, the better the system's efficiency.

Drop-out and repetition rates in Lesotho are relatively high, exacerbating the already high cost of education. In primary schools, drop-out rates fluctuated between 7 per cent and 12 per cent for

standard 1 and between 1 per cent and 9 per cent for Standard 7 in the period 1993 to 1998 and, in the same period, an average of 50 per cent of pupils entering Standard 1 completed standard 7.

At secondary-school level, high drop-out rates led to severe wastage levels as 37.7 per cent of the pupils dropped out of school between Forms A and C in 1993. This rate increased to 41.4 per cent and 43 per cent in 1996 and 1997 respectively. A similar trend is observed for the senior classes (Forms D and E).

Costs appear to be an important factor for many households in making decisions to withdraw their children from school, particularly with regard to secondary schools. There are, however, a considerable number of school-age children, whose parents can afford to pay fees, yet the children are not in school. This is an interesting situation for further investigation if the government intends to attract all children into school.

Another pointer to the fact that cost is not the only reason for children to drop out of school in Lesotho is that after the long teachers' strike of 1995, many households removed their children from school and sent them to school in South Africa. This is an important issue to investigate, because sending children to South Africa for basic education is not always a cheaper option. In South Africa, there are two main groups of school, the public schools that charge minimal or no fees at all, and the expensive private schools that, during the apartheid regime, were accessible mainly to white and especially rich people only. This is an indication that while there could be strong justification that some parents have difficulty paying for their children's education, many others can afford to pay even more than the schools in Lesotho require, and choose to pay more. There should be a serious reason for this, and poor levels of efficiency in Lesotho schools are cited as one.

At the same time, there are subtle signs that others can no longer tolerate the political stagnation which is threatening the successful progression of the country's education system, and are willing to pay the cost for better service, even if it means sending their children to neighbouring countries. Examples of the additional costs incurred by parents who send their children to South Africa are the high cost of living, and the hassle of obtaining study permits and medical insurance policies, which South Africa has recently introduced in an attempt to curb the influx of foreign students into its territory.

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## **VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Conclusion**

This report has presented Lesotho as one of the countries in the world with a very high prevalence of household and community resourcing of education, a country in which parents pay for the bulk of their children's education.

At the same time, economic growth in recent years has been negatively affected by the political situation, that has dampened hopes that the government will reach a point where it can, alone, sustain the provision of education to its people. Circumstances such as these have left the country with little choice but to work towards improving the balance between private and public financing of education. This means that households and communities will continue to contribute enormously towards the education of their children, as it is obvious that for many years to come, the Government of Lesotho will require community involvement and support to realize its main goal of making education accessible to all.

A number of researchers agree that debates on whether households and communities should contribute to the financing of education are usually complicated by the vast differences in governments' capacity to finance education (Bray, 1999). Some countries, like Sweden and Singapore, for example, are able to cover most of the resources necessary for the provision of education at almost all levels. But others, such as Lesotho, Zanzibar and Malawi, to cite a few, require a great deal of community contribution to keep their education systems operational. Whether households and communities should pay for the education of their children can be debated in countries that have several financial options, but countries such as Lesotho, which, even if they have the will to provide free



education to all, do not have the necessary resources to do so, are not in a position to enter the debate.

One is inclined to further agree with the findings by Bray (1999) that where household and community financing is greatest, *"that is not usually the result of deliberate policy, rather ... a default situation created by the governments' inability to meet all the needs which they would like to meet"* (p.16). Lesotho is in this category, wanting to do more for its people, yet it lacks the capacity to do so.

But despite its unavoidable situation, Lesotho can still reap some fruit from household and community financing through increased community involvement in the development of education. Households and communities who invest in education are more likely to take greater interest in their schools than would be the case if everything was provided free of charge.

There is no denying, however, that where communities finance education, inequalities between households and communities risk being exacerbated. Because rich households and communities are better able to afford to pay for quality education for their children than poorer ones, their children get a head start. Also, because the quality of education is one of the key determining factors of children's subsequent standard of living, it allows the widening of the existing gap between the rich and the poor.

Furthermore, in the area of management, household and community financing raises major issues about the handling and use of funds. One positive feature in Lesotho is the high proportion of schools that have elected school committees and boards, but the levels of operation of these committees still leave a lot to be desired. While these committees are intended to play a major role in the development and monitoring of the functioning of their schools, many do not have the necessary knowledge and confidence to perform this important role.

At school level, lack of institutional expertise to promote good planning and careful expenditure of resources has been identified as one of the key weaknesses of education systems in developing countries, Lesotho included (ADEA, 1998). This has led, in many instances, to problems of wastage, suspicions of embezzlement and, sometimes, actual embezzlement. An urgent need therefore exists to help schools to develop the necessary mechanisms to ensure that community and household resources are used sensibly, efficiently and fairly, and to find ways to raise resources.

Another thorny issue with regard to the education system of Lesotho relates to the ownership of schools and the power to make decisions about their operation. Since almost all schools are owned by churches, which hold more than 70 per cent of the country's population, it has been easy for the people of Lesotho (Basotho) to make financial contributions towards the success of the schools which they saw as their own. But the current boom in the establishment of government and community schools could have been influenced by the fact that the line separating churches and communities has been, and continues to be, hard to discern because it is the same community members who make up the church congregations. This development could be a clear indication that communities are beginning to want to be more involved and independent in their support for the education of their children. Surprisingly, the growing contribution of government to education has not changed its apparent lack of power over schools.

## **2. Recommendations**

The key recommendation is for the Government of Lesotho to consider what the most useful allocation of the scarce public funds should be if the object is to assume equity, and what role should be left for the private sector in this case (James, 1991). On dealing with

private financing of education, there are two sides to consider. On the one hand, it can extend the quantity and improve the quality of education, without which many schools in Lesotho would not be able to function at all. Yet, on the other hand, it may result in exacerbated inequalities between regions, between rural and urban areas, between individual schools, and between socio-economic groups in terms of access and equity.

Given these circumstances, the Government of Lesotho, through the Ministry of Education, other line ministries and all stakeholders, should develop approaches that recognize the current complexities of the education system. Such strategies should have the flexibility to suit different forces in order to maximize the positive sides of household and community financing and minimize the negative sides. Strategies to explore could include, among others: the revisiting and revision of guidelines determining the powers of government vis-à-vis those of the churches. The clarity of this relationship is a crucial subject that has never been seriously investigated, yet it is central to the success or failure of all education policies. The sharing of responsibilities among the key stakeholders is important, because the country has no option but to continue to solicit community support in working towards the provision of education for all. Government should realize that the private sector has a lot to offer and that it needs to be encouraged to support education. This, however, calls for government to play a different role.

The second recommendation, which is closely related to the first, has to do with the structure of the Ministry of Education and its functions. While the importance of a strong central body of the Ministry cannot be overemphasized, the process of decentralization is also long overdue. Many functions of the Ministry still need to be centralised, but most of the functions should be decentralized. For instance, the central Ministry needs to have an overview of patterns

and trends in education. It also needs to retain the power to guide and intervene in functions such as the allocation of grants and the identification of schools that require additional support, as well as the payment of teachers' salaries, which could be more easily handled at local levels. Once government has decided to decentralize the Ministry of Education, the process needs to be planned in such a way that it involves all stakeholders at the local level. Moreover, in order for change to bring positive results, rules and regulations need to be clarified (ADEA, 1998; UNESCO/IIEP, 1999-2000).

The amount of money collected by schools in fees could be seen by some as an indication that a high proportion of households manage to make the required contribution. But the sacrifices made by most households to send their children to school are enormous. This situation leads to the third recommendation. Government should develop more cost-effective strategies, especially for teacher financing, textbook provision and means-tested scholarships and loans for those who cannot afford to pay the fees.

Scholarship schemes for the poor need to be established and co-ordinated within the Ministry, where their appropriateness can be monitored and reviewed regularly. In order to ensure that established scholarship funds do not dry up, some national service programmes could be considered as an option to the repayment programme of loans, as implemented with the university students as it has had a very low success rate. This will ensure improved access to education in such a manner that all parties are given the opportunity to contribute in the way they can.

On the issue of textbook provision, the Ministry is already operating a book-rental scheme for primary schools, but in secondary schools parents still shoulder all the cost without any support whatsoever. It is urgent for the MOE to explore some textbook cost-



sharing schemes for secondary schools, to ensure that all pupils have access to learning materials on a one-to-one basis. The expectation that pupils should buy their own books will not help to improve the deteriorating efficiency at this level.

The management of teacher supply to schools and the administration of grants are areas in which some cost saving could be realized. Many of the long-established schools have more teaching positions and grants than they require, leaving other schools with little option but to employ more teachers privately, thus increasing the costs for households. The MOE should no longer just allocate the grants, but should regularly assess the needs of the schools to guide the decision to re-allocate grants where necessary.

The fourth recommendation concerns an issue that is central to this study: the variation in the level of fees charged by schools. Despite the fact that government has made some progress in curbing the uncontrolled fee increases in primary schools, a lot of work still needs to be done in secondary schools to ensure that parents pay only for what schools need to function and maintain required efficiency levels. For this to happen, a number of strategies will have to be considered. Of utmost importance is the rationalization of fees so that schools charge standard fees according to their regional needs. In 1995, the Ministry of Education commissioned a study on rationalization of fees in secondary schools, whose findings and recommendations received little attention for lack of commitment to follow-up. There is an urgent need for the MOE to develop clear guidelines on the types and levels of fees that may be charged by schools. In addition to this, an appropriate system of accounting has to be developed and implemented to ensure that economies are realized wherever possible. This is because *"greater accountability on how resources are used will force change on how systems are managed"* (ADEA, 1998).



Another cost-related issue that has not been covered in this study, but comes up as an issue of concern in other studies, is private tutoring (Bray, 1999; Kitaev, 1999). In the case of Lesotho, teachers responsible for final-year pupils in Standard 7, Form C and Form E have used private tutoring or extra classes to motivate and prepare their school candidates for the final examinations which determine their progression to the next level of schooling. Among the pupils, this was seen as a status symbol, distinguishing them from the rest of the junior pupils.

For many schools, the pupils' teachers at their own schools, at no extra cost, did this activity. But things have recently taken a different turn in the urban areas, where private tutoring, particularly in secondary schools, has become a shadowy business whose purpose seems to be to create opportunities for teachers to make extra money during the school holidays. This is one area of education provision which has not attracted researchers' interest in Lesotho, yet it seemingly consumes substantial resources and is bound to have implications for access and equity. A detailed study on the provision of private tutoring and its implications on the education system and on access and equity would shed some light on this complex and controversial subject.

One of the general conclusions made about private schools is that they are often more efficient than public schools and are, therefore, a cost-effective way of achieving educational expansion (James, 1991). But very few of the so-called *private schools* in Lesotho are really private as they are almost completely subsidized by government and, as such, lack the personal touch of the real private schools. Church schools and community schools in Lesotho are not any more efficient than others, instead, many of them are costly non-productive institutions. The fact that all teachers in these schools are government

employees means that the churches do not have a great deal of control over them.

Having considered the various aspects of financing of education in Lesotho, the concluding recommendation for the government is that the Ministry of Education should work towards changing some of its policies to raise educational quality to improve efficiency, without requiring additional public funds. Emphasis should be put on economizing by continuing to solicit private-sector support in financing education. Given the limited resources, the public sector does not provide a place for everyone. But because the private rate of return is high, many people are willing to pay the price for a private education. Under these conditions, fee-financed private schools continue to flourish and they are a highly profitable venture in Lesotho. What becomes an issue for concern, is when access compromises quality. Seeing that this is the direction in which secondary education is drifting, government should act quickly to minimize the entry of private-school owners, especially those with questionable educational backgrounds, who downgrade quality in order to maximize profits. This will call for massive campaigns through which government officials will inform communities about the legally registered schools and their quality to help them make informed choices.

To implement most of these recommendations, the Ministry will require effective management information systems, clearer policy frameworks and realistic strategies.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Junior Certificate Examination Fees (2001)

#### (a) School candidates

| No. of subjects | Registration fee | Subject fee | Total | Total (+ practical subject fee) |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------|-------|---------------------------------|
| Six             | M85              | M180        | M265  | M285                            |
| Seven           | M85              | M210        | M295  | M315                            |
| Eight           | M85              | M240        | M325  | M345                            |
| Nine            | M85              | M270        | M355  | M375                            |
| Ten             | M85              | M300        | M385  | M405                            |

#### (b) Private candidates

| No. of subjects | Registration fee | Subject fee | Total | Total (+ practical subject fee) |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------|-------|---------------------------------|
| One             | M110             | M35         | M145  | M175                            |
| Two             | M110             | M70         | M180  | M210                            |
| Three           | M110             | M105        | M215  | M245                            |
| Four            | M110             | M140        | M250  | M280                            |
| Five            | M110             | M175        | M285  | M315                            |
| Six             | M110             | M210        | M320  | M350                            |
| Seven           | M110             | M245        | M355  | M385                            |
| Eight           | M110             | M280        | M390  | M420                            |

N.B. In cases where candidates are taking more than one practical subject, extra M20.00 should be added to the last column of total fees, including subject fee. An extra practical fee for private candidates will be M30.00.

To obtain the correct calculation of total fees payable by each school, the following formula should be adopted:

|                          |   |                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Registration fee</b>  | = | Total number of candidates by registration fee per candidate;                                                                  |
| <b>Subject fee</b>       | = | Total number of subjects (for all registered candidates) by fee per subject;                                                   |
| <b>Practical fee</b>     | = | Total number of subjects by fee per practical subject (M20.00 in case of School candidates and M30.00 for private candidates); |
| <b>Total fee payable</b> | = | Registration fee + Subject fee + Practical Subject fee (per candidate).                                                        |

**Payment of examination fees:**

All schools are advised to pay by cheque (preferably bank-guaranteed cheque). In cases where schools do not have a bank account, payment can be made by postal order.

*Source:* ECOL.

## Appendix 2. COSC examination fees (2001)

### (a) School Candidates

| No. of subjects | Registration fee | Subject fee | Local fee | Total | Total (+ fee for one practical subject) |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------|-----------|-------|-----------------------------------------|
| One             | M80              | M90         | M100      | M270  | M290                                    |
| Two             | M80              | M180        | M100      | M360  | M380                                    |
| Three           | M80              | M270        | M100      | M450  | M470                                    |
| Four            | M80              | M360        | M100      | M540  | M560                                    |
| Five            | M80              | M450        | M100      | M630  | M650                                    |
| Six             | M80              | M540        | M100      | M720  | M740                                    |
| Seven           | M80              | M630        | M100      | M810  | M830                                    |
| Eight           | M80              | M720        | M100      | M900  | M920                                    |
| Nine            | M80              | M810        | M100      | M990  | M1,010                                  |

### (b) Private Candidates

| No. of subjects | Registration fee | Subject fee | Local fee | Total  | Total (+ fee for one practical subject) |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------|-----------|--------|-----------------------------------------|
| One             | M80              | M90         | M120      | M290   | M310                                    |
| Two             | M80              | M180        | M120      | M380   | M400                                    |
| Three           | M80              | M270        | M120      | M470   | M490                                    |
| Four            | M80              | M360        | M120      | M560   | M580                                    |
| Five            | M80              | M450        | M120      | M650   | M670                                    |
| Six             | M80              | M540        | M120      | M740   | M760                                    |
| Seven           | M80              | M630        | M120      | M830   | M850                                    |
| Eight           | M80              | M720        | M120      | M920   | M940                                    |
| Nine            | M80              | M810        | M120      | M1,010 | M1,030                                  |

N.B. To arrive at the correct total fees payable by the school, the following formula should be adopted:



|                          |   |                                                                                     |
|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Registration fee</b>  | = | Total number of candidates by registration fee per candidate;                       |
| <b>Subject fee</b>       | = | Total number of subjects taken by all registered candidates by fee per subject;     |
| <b>Local</b>             | = | Total number of candidates by local fee per candidate;                              |
| <b>Practical fee</b>     | = | Total number of subjects by fee per practical subject;                              |
| <b>Total fee payable</b> | = | Registration fee + Subject fee + Local fee + Practical Subject fee (per candidate). |

**Payment of examination fees:**

All schools are advised to pay by cheque (bank-guaranteed cheques are preferred). In cases where schools do not have a bank account, payment can be made by postal order.

*Source:* ECOL.

### Appendix 3. Teachers in primary schools by qualification and length of service and distribution in the career structure

#### (a) With teacher training

| Service  | Degree | APTC  | PTC | PII | LPTC+<br>Matric | LPTC<br>+JC | LPTC/PL3/<br>ITC3 | DM/UPGR/<br>EV2/PL2/<br>ITC2 | Totals |
|----------|--------|-------|-----|-----|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------|
| 0-4      | 100    | 93    | 437 | 3   | 4               | 10          | 41                | 7                            | 695    |
| 5 to 9   | 256    | 79    | 467 | 5   | 23              | 3           | 64                | 2                            | 899    |
| 10 to 14 | 398    | 109   | 454 | 6   | 60              | 7           | 130               | 2                            | 1,179  |
| 15-19    | 322    | 109   | 322 | 5   | 88              | 23          | 218               | 3                            | 1,090  |
| 20-24    | 208    | 97    | 92  | 7   | 61              | 52          | 202               | 8                            | 727    |
| 25-29    | 202    | 117   | 49  | 6   | 44              | 52          | 227               | 7                            | 733    |
| 30-34    | 93     | 79    | 32  | 1   | 37              | 52          | 145               | 10                           | 465    |
| 35 Plus  | 95     | 62    | 31  | 3   | 26              | 52          | 265               | 19                           | 600    |
| 1,674    | 745    | 1,894 | 36  | 343 | 52              | 1,292       | 58                | 6,388                        |        |

#### (b) Without teacher training

| Service  | COSC+<br>Matric | JC/<br>Interns | Stds<br>6-7-8 | Not<br>stated | Unqualified | Qualified | All teachers |
|----------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-----------|--------------|
| 0 to 4   | 511             | 401            | 13            | 29            | 954         | 695       | 1,649        |
| 5 to 9   | 191             | 305            | 6             | 11            | 513         | 899       | 1,412        |
| 10 to 14 | 43              | 147            | 7             | 6             | 203         | 1,179     | 1,379        |
| 15 to 19 | 5               | 49             | 5             | 3             | 62          | 1,090     | 1,152        |
| 20 to 24 | 0               | 7              | 6             | 1             | 14          | 727       | 741          |
| 25 to 29 | 3               | 2              | 10            | 3             | 18          | 733       | 751          |
| 30 to 35 | 0               | 1              | 1             | 3             | 5           | 465       | 470          |
| 35 Plus  | 2               | 1              | 4             | 9             | 16          | 600       | 616          |
| Total    | 755             | 913            | 52            | 65            | 1,785       | 6,388     | 8,170        |

**(c) Teacher distribution in the primary career  
structure, 1996**

| Teacher position    | Number | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------|------------|
| Unqualified teacher | 974    | 14.5       |
| Assistant teacher   | 2,695  | 40.1       |
| Experienced teacher | 709    | 10.5       |
| Senior teacher      | 1,325  | 19.7       |
| Deputy Principal    | 115    | 1.7        |
| Principal           | 905    | 13.5       |
| Total               | 6,723  | 100.0      |

**Appendix 4. Teachers in secondary schools****(a) Qualification, district and nationality – 1998**

| District | Degree | STC | PHD<br>Matric | Unqualified | Local | Expatriate | Total |
|----------|--------|-----|---------------|-------------|-------|------------|-------|
| B.B      | 89     | 50  | 22            | 46          | 179   | 28         | 207   |
| Leribe   | 305    | 151 | 33            | 130         | 518   | 101        | 619   |
| Berea    | 185    | 91  | 14            | 43          | 289   | 43         | 332   |
| Maseru   | 513    | 184 | 37            | 85          | 673   | 146        | 819   |
| Mafeteng | 175    | 103 | 24            | 42          | 288   | 56         | 344   |
| Mohale's | 145    | 59  | 15            | 33          | 220   | 32         | 255   |
| Quthing  | 66     | 84  | 19            | 34          | 132   | 21         | 153   |
| Qacha    | 41     | 30  | 8             | 34          | 100   | 13         | 113   |
| Mokhotl  | 31     | 24  | 4             | 24          | 77    | 9          | 86    |
| T.Tscka  | 19     | 32  | 3             | 11          | 61    | 4          | 65    |
| TOTALS   | 1,569  | 808 | 179           | 482         | 2,537 | 453        | 2,993 |

**(b) By terms of employment**

| Terms        | Local teachers | All teachers | % Local teachers |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|
| Permanent    | 924            | 1,019        | 90.7             |
| Temporary    | 143            | 223          | 64.1             |
| Probationary | 15             | 15           | 100.0            |
| Volunteer    | 4              | 15           | 26.7             |
| Contract     | 6              | 16           | 37.5             |
| Private      | 144            | 160          | 90.0             |
| Unstated     | 1,301          | 1,542        | 84.4             |
| Total        | 2,537          | 2,990        | 84.8             |

**(c) By qualification, length of service and nationality**

| Service  | Degree | STC | PH +<br>Matric | Unqualified | Local | Expatriate | Total |
|----------|--------|-----|----------------|-------------|-------|------------|-------|
| 0 to 4   | 542    | 315 | 83             | 342         | 1,145 | 137        | 1,282 |
| 5 to 9   | 401    | 42  | 42             | 75          | 519   | 141        | 660   |
| 10 to 14 | 238    | 136 | 12             | 35          | 352   | 69         | 421   |
| 15 to 19 | 162    | 81  | 10             | 14          | 221   | 46         | 267   |
| 20 to 24 | 91     | 33  | 11             | 8           | 123   | 20         | 143   |
| 25 to 29 | 48     | 27  | 5              | 2           | 63    | 19         | 82    |
| 30 to 34 | 38     | 12  | 8              | 0           | 52    | 6          | 58    |
| 35 Plus  | 48     | 15  | 8              | 6           | 62    | 15         | 77    |
| Total    | 1,568  | 661 | 179            | 482         | 2,537 | 453        | 2,990 |

**(d) Teacher distribution in the secondary career structure, 1996**

| Teacher position                                | Number | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Unqualified teacher                             | 204    | 8.3        |
| Assistant teacher (non-graduate)                | 481    | 19.6       |
| Experienced teacher (non-graduate)              | 310    | 12.6       |
| Senior teacher (non-graduate)                   | 235    | 9.6        |
| Assistant teacher (graduate)                    | 420    | 17.1       |
| Experienced teacher (graduate)                  | 382    | 15.6       |
| Senior teacher (graduate)                       | 160    | 6.5        |
| Head of department                              |        |            |
| Deputy Principal (junior secondary)             | 44     | 1.8        |
| Principal (junior secondary)                    | 51     | 2.1        |
| Deputy Principal (senior secondary/high school) | 78     | 3.2        |
| Principal (senior secondary/high school)        | 90     | 3.7        |
| Total                                           | 2,455  | 100.0      |



# Appendix 5. The cost and financing of education

## A. Inputs

|                                             | 1990   | 1991    | 1992    | 1993-1994 | 1994-1995 | 1995-1996 | 1996-1997 | 1997-1998 | 1998-1999 |
|---------------------------------------------|--------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Total recurrent budget (in M000)            | 81,230 | 144,490 | 159,665 | 198,061   | 284,986   | 335,631   | 413,408   | 460,329   | 536,547   |
| Increase over previous year (%)             |        | 74.4    | 0.98    | 24.04     | 43.9      | 17.8      | 23.2      | 11.3      | 16.6      |
| Total non-salary recurrent budget (in M000) | 6,228  | 6,517   | 9,182   | 48,136    | 110,570   | 127,497   | 160,591   | 190,639   | 220,672   |
| Increase over previous year (%)             |        | 2.6     | 24.96   |           | 129.7     | 15.3      | 26.0      | 18.7      | 15.8      |
| Non-salary budget as % of total budget      | 7.7    | 46.58   |         | 24.3      | 38.8      | 38        | 38.8      | 41.4      | 41.1      |
| % GOL recurrent budget to MOE               | 17.4   | 25.3    | 26.1    | 21.8      | 19.8      | 28.9      | 29.3      | 26.6      | 23.4      |
| % GOL capital budget to MOE                 | 5.8    | 6       | 11.2    | 11.8      | 9.1       | 10.6      | 10.5      | 9.9       | 10.1      |
| % MOE recurrent budget to:                  |        |         |         |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Primary education                           | 52.0   | n.a     | 54.4    | 50.8      | 42        | 43.6      | 42.4      | 40.5      | 40.1      |
| Secondary education                         | 30.0   | n.a     | 26.2    | 26.9      | 27.1      | 23.7      | 24.0      | 22.9      | 23.4      |
| Technical/vocational education              | 2.4    | n.a     | 2.6     | 3.1       | 3.7       | 6.6       | 6.7       | 7.7       | 7.5       |
| University                                  | 15.0   | n.a     | 15.9    | 16.9      | 15.8      | 25.0      | 26.0      | 27.8      | 27.9      |
| Non-formal education                        | 0.0    | n.a     | 0.2     | 2.3       | 2.2       | 1.0       | 1.1       | 1.2       | 1.1       |
| % MOE capital budget to:                    |        |         |         |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Primary education                           | n.a    | n.a     | 56.5    | 64.7      | 44.7      | 44.8      | 48.8      | 49.6      | 52.9      |
| Secondary education                         | n.a    | n.a     | 22.4    | 22.8      | 41.4      | 41.5      | 42.4      | 38.1      | 14.9      |
| Technical/vocational education              | n.a    | n.a     | 12.4    | 9.4       | 9.1       | 9.1       | 4.5       | 3.8       | 12.0      |
| University                                  | n.a    | n.a     | 6.2     | 2.7       | 4.5       | 4.5       | 4.3       | 7.0       | 19.4      |
| Non-formal education                        | n.a    | n.a     | 0.0     | 0.3       | 0.1       | 0.1       | 0.1       | 1.5       | 0.9       |

## (Continued)

Tuition fees in primary and secondary education in Lesotho:  
the levels and implications for access, equity and efficiency

|                                             | 1990   | 1991   | 1992   | 1993-1994 | 1994-1995 | 1995-1996 | 1996-1997 | 1997-1998 | 1998-1999 |
|---------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| % MOE recurrent expenditure to:             |        |        |        |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Primary education                           | 47.1   | 52.1   | n.a    | 47.7      | 40.5      | 37.3      | 41.9      | 41.6      | 42.4      |
| Secondary education                         | 31.2   | 31.4   | n.a    | 29.3      | 26.4      | 32.7      | 25        | 2.3       | 24.2      |
| Technical/vocational education              | 2.7    | 2.7    | n.a    | 2.9       | 6.1       | 3.8       | 5.6       | 7.1       | 5.9       |
| University                                  | 19.1   | 13.7   | n.a    | 18.4      | 24.3      | 25.3      | 26.5      | 26.7      | 26.6      |
| Non-formal education                        | n.a    | n.a    | n.a    | 1.7       | 2.6       | 0.9       | 0.9       | 1.3       | 0.9       |
| % MOE capital expenditure to:               |        |        |        |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Primary education                           | n.a    | n.a    | n.a    | 78.0      | 55        | 54.4      | 24.7      | 47.5      | 69.2      |
| Secondary education                         | n.a    | n.a    | n.a    | 8.0       | 36        | 31.6      | 66.6      | 42.3      | 13.4      |
| Technical/vocational education              | n.a    | n.a    | n.a    | 13.0      | 5         | 4.7       | 1.6       | 4.7       | 9.7       |
| University                                  | n.a    | n.a    | n.a    | 1.0       | 4         | 8.5       | 7         | 5.5       | 7.7       |
| Non-formal education                        | n.a    | n.a    | n.a    | 0.0       | 0         | 0.8       | 0.1       | 0         | 0         |
| Budget allocation per primary pupil         | n.a    | 208    | 240    | 284       | 326       | 388       | 468       | 505       | 583       |
| Budget allocation per secondary pupil       | n.a    | 921    | 807    | 962       | 1,045     | 1,198     | 1,466     | 1,472     | 1,762     |
| Budget allocation per TVET trainee          | n.a    | 15,024 | 2,606  | 3,958     | 12,350    | 13,583    | 17,510    | 22,305    | 26,544    |
| Budget allocation per university student    | n.a    | 15,024 | 15,786 | 18,573    | 39,305    | 41,984    | 52,263    | 59,595    | 66,761    |
| Average primary school fee (M)              | 28     | 37     | 34     | 43        | 49        | 52        | 56        | n.a       | n.a       |
| Average primary fee in constant 1990 prices | 28     | 31.4   | 24.7   | 27        | 29        | 28.1      | 27.7      | n.a       | n.a       |
| Average secondary school fee (M)            | 522.9  | 563.24 | n.a    | 715.18    | 814.98    | 961.35    | 962.04    | n.a       | n.a       |
| Average secondary fee in 1990 prices        | 522.9  | 478    | n.a    | 455.50    | 482.5     | 519.4     | 476.5     | n.a       | n.a       |
| <b>B. Outputs</b>                           |        |        |        |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Expenditure per primary pupil               | 86     | 160    | 239    | 244       | 242       | 177       | 384       | 514       | 551       |
| Expenditure per secondary pupil             | 462    | 750    | 807    | 962       | 940       | 884       | 1,331     | 1,481     | 1,630     |
| Expenditure per TVET trainee                | 1,307  | 1,931  | 2,606  | 3,300     | 7,887     | 4,164     | 12,504    | 20,317    | 18,635    |
| Expenditure per university student          | 10,671 | 11,174 | 15,786 | 18,573    | 28,577    | 22,716    | 45,044    | 56,614    | 56,865    |

Source: Planning Unit MOE.

**Appendix 6. Currently employed population of 10 years and above  
for urban and rural areas**

| Age group | Urban             |                        | Rural             |                        |
|-----------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
|           | Total<br>employed | Subsistence<br>farmers | Total<br>employed | Subsistence<br>farmers |
| 10 - 14   | -                 | -                      | -                 | -                      |
| 15 - 19   | 5,805             | 833                    | 38,412            | 29,907                 |
| 20 - 24   | 9,215             | 676                    | 34,342            | 23,360                 |
| 25 - 29   | 17,141            | 1,757                  | 27,860            | 15,346                 |
| 30 - 34   | 14,915            | 1,060                  | 25,268            | 11,777                 |
| 35 - 39   | 12,956            | 718                    | 22,654            | 11,158                 |
| 40 - 44   | 9,368             | 918                    | 20,510            | 10,973                 |
| 45 - 49   | 6,286             | 275                    | 19,755            | 11,927                 |
| 50 - 54   | 3,476             | 566                    | 15,939            | 9,967                  |
| 55 - 59   | 3,344             | 568                    | 15,732            | 12,109                 |
| 60 - 64   | 1,491             | 343                    | 11,213            | 8,122                  |
| 65 - 69   | 1,102             | 243                    | 9,031             | 7,136                  |
| 70 - 74   | 236               | -                      | 2,535             | 1,660                  |
| 75 +      | 124               | -                      | 4,932             | 4,182                  |
| A.N.S.    | 1,563             | 624                    | 17,950            | 14,964                 |
| TOTAL     | 87,022            | 8,581                  | 266,133           | 172,588                |

Source: Labour Force Survey 1997.

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**Appendix 7. Currently unemployed population of 10 years and above  
for urban and rural areas**

| Age group | Urban  | Rural   |
|-----------|--------|---------|
| 10 - 14   | 2,557  | 20,043  |
| 15 - 19   | 5,154  | 29,751  |
| 20 - 24   | 7,285  | 36,834  |
| 25 - 29   | 6,795  | 22,379  |
| 30 - 34   | 3,505  | 17,016  |
| 35 - 39   | 2,237  | 13,399  |
| 40 - 44   | 1,642  | 11,229  |
| 45 - 49   | 1,301  | 11,100  |
| 50 - 54   | 823    | 8,061   |
| 55 - 59   | 814    | 8,014   |
| 60 - 64   | 942    | 7,589   |
| 65 - 69   | 747    | 6,905   |
| 70 - 74   | 208    | 4,787   |
| 75 +      | 441    | 6,972   |
| A.N.S.    | 275    | 1,250   |
| TOTAL     | 34,726 | 205,329 |

Source: Labour Force Survey 1997

### **Principals' interview questions *[the dynamics of fees]***

1. What payment schedule is accepted?
2. Are parents allowed to pay in installments?
3. Are outside funds available to assist pupils?
4. Is alternative pay accepted? What type?  
Livestock?  
Vegetables/Fruit?  
Grains?  
Labour/Services?  
Use of fields?
5. How often do fees change?
6. What influences the change of fees?
7. At what rate are fees paid?
8. What concessions are made to those who cannot afford to pay fees?
9. Does your school provide meals?  
How does it obtain the food?
10. How can the system of financing education be improved?

### **Households' interview questions *[impact of tuition fees on families]***

1. What is the overall cost of educating your children?
2. What items do you pay for?
3. What is your opinion about school fees charged by schools?
4. What do you forego by sending your children to school?
5. Why do you send your children to school?
6. What do you know about FPE in Lesotho?
7. What is your opinion about FPE?
8. How can the system of financing education be improved?



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### **The book**

This publication addresses one of the lesser explored research issues – tuition and other fees practised in education as a means of cost-sharing. The case of Lesotho is an extreme example of household and community financing of education, both at primary and secondary level, with parents paying for the bulk of their children's schooling.

The study looks into the issues raised by such a situation, such as equity and access, as well as management and ownership considerations. It is clear that household and community financing tends to lead to a widening of the gap between the rich and the poor, yet it does also imply that the families and communities who invest in education take a greater interest in their schools than would otherwise be the case.

The Ministry of Education, although under-resourced, still has an important role to play, particularly in setting standards, rationalizing tuition fees and introducing special measures for those unable to pay fees. The study stresses the need for a judicious allocation of the scarce public funds available, and suggests strategies to maximize the positive aspects of the current system whilst minimizing the negative ones.

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### **The author**

*The study on tuition and other fees in Lesotho was prepared by **Liteboho Maqalika Lerotholi**, officer at the Central Inspectorate, Lesotho Ministry of Education and former IIEP trainee.*

### **Tuition fees in primary and secondary education in Lesotho**

the levels and implications for access, equity and efficiency



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